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Fashion Shows and the Metaverse
The Effectiveness of Digital Fashion Shows for Advertising a Brand

Supervisor
Ch. Prof. Luciana Oranges Cezarino

Graduand
Giorgia Piva
Matriculation number 878715

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To my loved ones, for supporting me and believing in me.

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Abstract

The fashion industry has proved to be a competitive place for companies to be in. To be remembered and chosen by consumers, these companies use several marketing tools, including fashion shows.

Nowadays fashion shows are not only in presence but they can also be in virtual mode. In fact, after the pandemic, and with the increasing influence of AI on almost every business, digital fashion shows came to surface.
The two kinds of fashion shows, in presence or online, can be powerful marketing tools, having the scope to give visibility to the brand and let customers know about the existence of the brand.

Specifically, digital fashon shows take place in the metaverse, a surreal world where brands can host their virtual runaways and offer on-site purchase platforms. In the metaverse there are various opportunities and prospects for stakeholders, including tech developers, fashion brands, and consumers.
This new, virtual, type of fashion show has been adopted by several brands, from the most famous, such as Dolce & Gabbana and Tommy Hilfiger, to cite two of them, to the least famous, and newborn ones, such as Auroboros.

Overall, this thesis aims at uncovering the insights of both physical and digital fashion shows, understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the two, and, as a result, comprehending if the newborn digital fashion shows can be a substitute or a complement to standard, already existing, fashion runaways.
This paper is the result of research based on data drawn from various documental sources and the results of an online survey put together in a coherent work. It does not have the intent to exhaust the theme, but, rather, it wants to be a starting point for discussion and further analysis.

The key topic developed in this thesis, meaning digital fashion show, is a brand new one and has plenty of opportunities to be developed further.

Keywords

fashion, fashion industry, fashion show, metaverse, marketing, digital marketing

Introduction

This thesis endeavors to investigate the effectiveness of fashion runways as marketing tools, with a particular focus on the emerging realm of digital fashion shows.

The fashion industry, highly competitive, utilizes various marketing tools like fashion shows to gain consumer attention. In recent years, the fashion industry has undergone also significant digital transformation, spurred by advancements in digital technology and influenced by societal changes, particularly those accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, new market tools arise as digital fashion shows. Those shows, particularly those in the metaverse, offer unique opportunities for brands to showcase collections and provide virtual shopping experiences. However, challenges exist in navigating compromises and addressing emerging threats while facilitating the evolution towards the metaverse.

Chapter 1 explores this digital evolution, discussing the integration of technology into the fashion landscape, the rise of digital fashion shows, and the emergence of the metaverse. The chapter provides insights into how Industry 4.0 and societal needs have shaped this transformation, paving the way for innovative experiences like virtual fashion shows and immersive metaverse environments.

Chapter 2 delves into the practical manifestations of this digital shift, examining events such as Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week and the pioneering efforts of brands like Auroboros. These examples offer a glimpse into the possibilities and challenges of digital fashion, showcasing both the potential and the limitations of virtual experiences in the fashion industry.

Chapter 3 introduces the key stakeholders in the metaverse fashion industry and explores the opportunities and challenges they face. From technical developers creating virtual platforms to fashion brands seeking to engage consumers in immersive

experiences, each stakeholder plays a crucial role in shaping the future of fashion marketing in the metaverse.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of a survey conducted to gauge public perceptions of virtual fashion shows and the metaverse. The results indicate a growing interest in digital fashion experiences, suggesting a promising outlook for the integration of virtual shows into the fashion industry.

Chapter 5 offers insights into the future prospects of fashion marketing in the metaverse, highlighting the potential for enhanced consumer engagement and brand experiences. While challenges remain, such as accessibility and sustainability concerns, the metaverse presents a dynamic landscape for innovation and creativity in the fashion industry.

In summary, this research is a comprehensive exploration of the intersection between fashion, technology, and marketing, shedding light on the evolving landscape of digital fashion shows and the opportunities they present for brands and consumers alike. Overall, this paper catalyzes discussion and further investigation into the novel and promising area of digital fashion shows.

Chapter 1. Digital Technologies in Fashion Marketing

In recent years, the fashion landscape has experienced a profound transformation, largely influenced by the rise of digital technologies. This digital age has ushered in a new era marked by significant changes in how fashion shows are presented and how designers interact with global audiences. These improvements are showcased in this chapter.

Chapter 1.1 discusses how Industry 4.0 has brought to the integration of technology into the fashion landscape. The Fourth Industrial Revolution represents the next stage in the digitalization of the manufacturing sector (McKinsey&Company.com, 2022), introducing innovative ways in which technology integrates into societies and human lives and emerging from societal needs and desires (Davis, N., 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this digital transformation, prompting businesses to adopt digital technologies to ensure continuity (Dazeddigital.com, 2022). Digital fashion shows have emerged as a significant aspect of this transformation, democratizing access to fashion presentations and allowing brands to engage with global audiences (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

Various digital formats, including live streams and interactive experiences, have showcased the potential of digital technologies to enhance the fashion experience. Additionally, the rise of the metaverse has led to brands embracing virtual environments and NFT technology to connect with younger consumers, signifying a shift in how fashion is perceived and expressed in the digital age (Awear, 2023).

Chapter 1.2 delves into the world of fashion shows, highlighting their evolution from exclusive events for industry insiders to vital marketing tools. They attract media attention, generate buzz, and set trends for upcoming seasons. Despite their exclusivity, fashion shows serve as platforms for brands to promote their latest collections to a global audience of buyers, media professionals, and celebrities. Held during Fashion Weeks, mainly taking place in Paris, London, Milan, and New York, these

runway shows unveil upcoming collections, attracting media attention and setting trends (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Originating in the 1800s, fashion shows have become elaborate spectacles that blend fashion and art, conveying designers' messages and aesthetics (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Today, fashion shows are spectacles that blur the lines between fashion and art. They incorporate various elements, including models, locations, themes, and finales, to convey a designer's message and aesthetic (Kumar, M., 2022). They serve as platforms for brands to promote their collections globally, showcasing clothing design skills and brand values, bridging the gap between designers and consumers (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Storytelling is paramount in fashion marketing, as it establishes emotional connections with consumers and fosters brand loyalty. By inviting consumers to participate in the brand's narrative, fashion shows elevate garments into symbols of identity and fashion, transcending mere visual appeal. (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

In Chapter 1.3 the concept of the metaverse in the fashion industry is introduced. The fashion industry has witnessed a significant evolution with the emergence of the metaverse, leading to the emergence of a new type of fashion week.

Coined by Neal Stephenson in his novel "Snow Crash" (Ng, N., 2023), the metaverse represents an immersive digital realm where individuals interact with virtual environments and entities. With advancements in technologies like VR, AR, 5G, AI, and blockchain, the metaverse is gaining traction, attracting attention from both consumers and brands (Ng, N., 2023).

Fashion brands are increasingly recognizing the potential of the metaverse in their operations, with initiatives such as Metaverse Fashion Week and collaborations with gaming platforms. The metaverse offers opportunities for immersive storytelling, virtual fashion shows, and the creation of digital avatars, enabling brands to engage with consumers in innovative ways (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

However, the transition to the metaverse poses challenges for fashion marketers, including maintaining brand identity and merging physical content with the virtual realm.

Nevertheless, brands are embracing this new frontier, leveraging immersive narratives and interactive experiences to connect with consumers and shape the future of fashion marketing (Bain, M., 2022).

As the metaverse continues to evolve, it presents a dynamic platform for fashion brands to explore new creative horizons, engage with audiences, and cultivate vibrant communities. By leveraging the immersive and interactive nature of the metaverse, fashion marketers can craft compelling brand experiences and foster deeper connections with consumers, ushering in a new era of fashion marketing (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Chapter 1.4 introduces the three key stakeholders involved in fashion shows in the metaverse: technical developers, fashion brands, and consumers, that will be developed further in chapter 3.

In brief, technical developers, including companies, organizations, and agencies, create content for the metaverse, such as video game frameworks or digital assets.
Fashion brands, comprising fashion designers, brand managers, and marketers, are eager to showcase their collections in the metaverse, also forming partnerships with other brands.
Finally, consumers enter the metaverse to engage with brands, explore virtual environments, and interact with other users.

These stakeholders collaborate to establish a presence in the metaverse, offering opportunities for innovative initiatives and immersive experiences (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 1.1. The Advent of Digital Technologies in the Fashion Industry

In the last years, the fashion landscape underwent a significant transformation. The evolution of fashion shows has been profoundly influenced by the advent of digital technologies, ushering in a new era marked by transformative changes. In this digital age, the traditional landscape of fashion presentations has undergone a paradigm shift, with technological advancements reshaping the way designers showcase their creations and connect with global audiences.

Industry 4.0, also known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution or 4IR, can be identified as the subsequent stage in the digitalization of the manufacturing sector. It is propelled by disruptive trends such as the proliferation of data and connectivity, advancements in analytics, human-machine interaction, and enhancements in robotics (McKinsey&Company.com, 2022).

The advent of Industry 4.0 heralds the arrival of "cyber-physical systems," as noted by Davis (2016), ushering in new possibilities for both humans and machines. These advancements leverage the foundations laid by the technologies and infrastructure of the Third Industrial Revolution, but the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings about novel ways in which technology integrates into societies and even the human body (Davis, N., 2016).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution denotes the contemporary period characterized by connectivity, sophisticated analytics, automation, and advanced manufacturing technologies, which have been reshaping global businesses for a considerable time. This transformative wave in the manufacturing domain commenced in the mid-2010s and carries substantial potential for operational enhancement and the evolution of production methodologies (McKinsey&Company.com, 2022).

The intricacy and novelty of these technologies often render aspects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfamiliar and potentially intimidating to many.

However, it's essential to recognize that industry 4.0 has brought to the surface novel technologies resulting from people and society's needs and desires (Davis N., 2016). Every industrial revolution is fundamentally guided by the collective decisions of individuals and society. It's not only the decisions of researchers, inventors, and designers influencing the development of technologies that matter, but also the decisions of investors, consumers, regulators, and citizens who incorporate these technologies into their everyday lives. Although the Fourth Industrial Revolution may appear as a powerful external force, resembling a tsunami, it essentially reflects our aspirations and the choices we make (Davis, N., 2016).

Additionally, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic propelled the industry deeper into the digital sphere than previously experienced (Dazeddigital.com, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for Industry 4.0, prompting companies to expedite their adoption of digital technologies (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).
With physical distancing measures and changing consumer behaviors, businesses had to pivot quickly to survive, and, in this case, technology served as a vital tool in crisis response and business continuity (Davis, N., 2016).
While some brands have adjusted more smoothly than others, the collective effort to recalibrate for this evolving landscape is evident (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).

From virtual runways to interactive experiences, the integration of digital elements has not only expanded the reach of fashion shows but has also revolutionized the very essence of these sartorial exhibitions. This exploration delves into the multifaceted transformations that the intersection of fashion and digital technologies has ushered in, redefining the narrative of how style is showcased and experienced in the contemporary world.

'It's a brave new world for digital fashion shows', states the author Emma Feldner-Busztin states in her article titled 'Where Digital And Physical Collide: The New Era of Digital Fashion Shows', where she depicts the new era of digital fashion shows, an era where designers can experiment and expand their influence through the use of digital

tools, and the process through which fashion shows' transformation has taken place (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

The previously cited quote suggests that the landscape of fashion shows has undergone significant and courageous transformations with the integration of digital technologies. It implies a departure from traditional norms, embracing innovative approaches, and navigating uncharted territories in the realm of presenting fashion through digital platforms. The expression conveys a sense of excitement and exploration as the fashion industry adapts to new possibilities and experiences in the digital era.

As stated in the article, in September 2020, New York, London, Milan and Paris hosted their fashion weeks. While a few megabrands chose to showcase their collections through physical events, the majority opted for digital fashion shows (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

There are several positive aspects brought by the introduction of this new means to present fashion shows, both positive and negative.

On the one hand, the digitalization of fashion shows allowed a much broader audience to experience the fashion industry's presentations from the comfort of their homes, offering a glimpse into how brands, regardless of size, tackled the task of presenting their creative visions in a digital format (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).
While fashion shows were initially designed for buyers and fashion journalists, the Internet has initiated a democratization process even on the runways. Consumers now have the opportunity to purchase the items they observe on the catwalk directly through the "see now, buy now" model (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023). Additionally, the fashion show arena became more accessible, alleviating fashion's traditionally high entry barrier and fixation on exclusivity. For the first time, access was extended globally, resulting in a substantial increase in viewership (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).
Moreover, to a certain degree, the digital fashion shows in September 2020 equalized the opportunities for both large and small brands.

On the other hand, achieving an equilibrium between creating a spectacle, narrating a compelling story, and highlighting the actual clothing was clear to be a considerable challenge.

With this new kind of fashion show, the conventional sources of excitement for fashion shows in major cities - such as the venue, models, and guests - lost their significance. The focal point shifted to the extent to which a video or experience could captivate, involve, and amaze the audience (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

Consider Dior, for instance, as it inaugurated Paris Fashion Week with its spring/summer 2021 collection. The show was globally livestreamed across numerous platforms, attracting an audience of 95 million - a remarkable increase from the 12.3 million views garnered during the autumn/winter livestream a few months earlier (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

Prominent brands made their mark in various ways: Balenciaga captivated audiences with a captivating music video showcasing their collection during a nighttime stroll through Paris; Burberry took viewers on a thrilling journey through the mountains, featuring models on the back of a moving vehicle; Louis Vuitton seamlessly integrated the digital and physical realms, using a green screen for images on the walls alongside the physical runway. Noteworthy contributions also came from smaller brands, like Jason Wu, who hosted an intimate rooftop display accessible digitally. Marine Serre's film "Amor Fati" and Khaite's augmented reality experience were particularly memorable, allowing attendees to view items by scanning a QR code and bringing them to life in 3D on their phones (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

However, Chanel, Dior, and Louis Vuitton persevered in their endeavour to restore a semblance of normalcy and opted not to fully embrace a digital format. Ultimately, according to Launchmetrics, these brands emerged as the most successful of the season. Launchmetrics is a data tracking company which, through software, data and insights, allows to bridge the gap between strategy and execution and aims at improving one's brand performance with leading solutions for fashion, lifestyle and beauty (Launchmetrics.com). It measures success through Media Impact Value (MIV), a data that strives to depict the financial impact generated by media placements and

influencer mentions in the realms of fashion, luxury, and beauty. This enables companies to monitor the return on investment from their marketing strategies (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

The trend of digital fashion is gaining momentum: Recently, a digital Gucci bag was resold on Roblox for $4,115, surpassing the price of its physical counterpart. Burberry and Farfetch introduced a 3D environment to showcase new bags, and Farfetch partnered with Prada to offer digital try-on experiences on Snapchat. Additionally, several marketplaces are positioning themselves as leading platforms for digital fashion (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

The success of live, in-person shows isn't unexpected, given the enduring desire of the fashion elite for physical displays (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).
Central to the issue was that numerous shows consisted mainly of a sequence of looks, often presented in a catwalk format. While this might suffice for dedicated fans, it lacked the appeal needed to captivate the average viewer (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022). What proved most effective were the presentations that incorporated a personal touch, exemplified by Bethany Williams's video honoring the bond between mother and child, or Roksanda's film showcasing three generations of women from a single family. Similarly, the direct interaction of Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons with the audience during the virtual fashion show finale garnered significant praise (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

Despite the success of in-person shows with respect to digital ones, these presentations went beyond expectations by innovating within the digital framework, aiming for something more enduring than just a temporary solution (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022), and the later adoption and success of Metaverse in fashion shows is the proof.

In the dynamic realm of fashion, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) have emerged as a transformative force. These unique digital certificates of ownership are currently highly sought-after commodities within the fashion industry. NFTs securely record ownership

and transaction history on a blockchain, ensuring transparency and authenticity. Unlike fungible assets like fiat currencies, each NFT is distinct and cannot be exchanged for another, often representing tangible items such as art, tickets, and real estate. While initially associated with digital assets like images and videos, NFTs have now extended their influence to the fashion sector, documenting ownership of physical goods like apparel.

Overall, NFTs hold the potential to revolutionize the fashion industry by addressing sustainability concerns (Awear, 2023).

Brands are venturing into the digital realm also through the expansive domain of video games, offering clothing that users can purchase to dress avatars and characters (Paleari, L., 2022).

During the pandemic, with physical stores shuttered and fashion events canceled, brands turned to video games such as Fortnite, Roblox, and Animal Crossing to engage with consumers and drive revenue (Awear, 2023).

Pioneering collaborations, such as Valentino's comprehensive offerings within Animal Crossing, Moschino's specialized collections for the immensely popular game The Sims, and Balenciaga's presence in Fortnite, a platform frequented by 400 million users worldwide, enabling the purchase of branded clothing for their virtual avatars, have seen significant success, particularly among Gen Z (Paleari, L., 2022).

Talking about augmented reality clothing, it allows consumers to wear the apparel they purchase digitally. This technology overlays digital images onto camera footage of the real world (Awear, 2023).

AR fashion has gained popularity, with brands like DRESSX and XR Couture offering elaborate digital garments that customers can virtually wear using AR. Retailers like GAP are also exploring virtual try-on technology (Awear, 2023).

Brands are increasingly integrating AR with NFT technology, enabling customers to collect, wear, and trade digital garments. For instance, Nike and RTFKT recently introduced Nike Dunk Genesis Cryptokicks, a collection of 20,000 NFT sneakers that owners can visualize in the real world using a Snapchat filter (Awear, 2023).

Additionally, brands are also facilitating customers to adorn their digital assets within the metaverse, leveraging the burgeoning blockchain-backed realms like Decentraland and The Sandbox, which boast millions of registered users (Awear, 2023).

Fashion's immersion in the metaverse was prominently displayed at the debut Metaverse Fashion Week held within Decentraland. The NFT fashion extravaganza featured over 70 brands, including Tommy Hilfiger, Dolce & Gabbana, and Karl Lagerfeld, showcasing their collaborations with renowned digital designers on branded catwalks. Moreover, numerous brands capitalized on the event to offer NFT wearables for users to outfit their avatars. For instance, Tommy Hilfiger presented digital renditions of its iconic designs, including logo hoodies and varsity jackets (Awear, 2023).

Furthermore, fashion brands are increasingly acquiring their own NFTs, often in the guise of virtual land parcels, enabling them to construct stores and showrooms tailored to appeal to younger consumers (Awear, 2023).

Platforms like The Sandbox offer users the opportunity to purchase land parcels in the form of NFTs, and luxury labels like Gucci are swiftly taking advantage of this opportunity. Teaming up with the platform, Gucci aims to establish an interactive fashion destination inspired by Gucci Vault, the luxury brand's conceptual space (Awear, 2023).

Furthermore, as a result of a Scalefast survey, a quarter of NFT-interested customers would be more inclined to make a purchase if it involved a tangible item. Consequently, numerous brands are amalgamating NFTs with physical products that customers can physically interact with (Awear, 2023).

An exemplary instance is Dolce & Gabbana's groundbreaking Collezione Genesi, the premier luxury NFT collection featuring both digital and physical components. This collection fetched a staggering $5.7 million at auction, with successful bidders receiving both a physical and virtual rendition of their chosen design. Another illustration comes from Nick Graham, who recently introduced an NFT/AR line of outerwear. Each item in this line contains a QR code embedded within, allowing buyers to verify their garment's authenticity on the blockchain and access exclusive AR experiences (Awear, 2023).

Some brands are leveraging NFT technology to enhance traceability. Their physical hoodies linked to NFTs can be scanned, providing proof of authenticity and ownership via the blockchain (Awear, 2023).

Gucci is not the sole player in the metaverse. For instance, Selfridges recently inaugurated the world's premier NFT department store within Decentraland, enabling users to peruse exclusive NFTs and browse Selfridges' product offerings (Awear, 2023).

Fashion brands are exploring avenues beyond virtual clothing (Awear, 2023). Interestingly, the industry's first venture into the realm of NFTs didn't involve wearable items but rather a four-minute film inspired by Gucci's Aria collection. Following this, the luxury brand introduced its 'Gucci Grail' NFTs, featuring brand-themed avatars inspired by 11 iconic collections. Adidas has also entered into similar collaborations, incorporating its brand into well-known collections such as Punks Comic (Awear, 2023). Likewise, fashion retailer MANGO has recently launched an NFT collection inspired by Spanish artists Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies, and Miquel Barceló, showcasing a range of MANGO outfits. Created to celebrate the inauguration of its New York flagship store, the brand plans to display the artwork in both physical and virtual stores, aiming to engage with young consumers rather than simply selling the collection outright (Awear, 2023).

By leveraging NFTs to produce limited-edition items, brands can instil a sense of scarcity, enhancing their perceived value in the fashion domain and compelling customers to make immediate purchases. In an increasingly digital-driven world, NFTs are reshaping the fashion landscape by embracing personalization, interactivity, and the metaverse. As the fashion NFT market expands, it becomes evident that these tokens transcend mere digital assets, signifying a profound transformation in how we interact with fashion and express our identity in the age of digital technology (Awear, 2023).

Especially noteworthy is Generation Z's profound interest in the Metaverse. For all brands aiming to engage with this generation, it's crucial to initiate efforts in comprehending this trend as a novel method of perceiving reality. According to a

recent McKinsey study, Gen Z, along with millennials and Gen X consumers, are projected to invest up to 5 hours a day within the Metaverse within the upcoming 5 years (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

Some speculate that selecting the right and trendy outfits for one's avatar could become as crucial for the average consumer as acquiring new-season clothing from the fashion runways in Paris, New York, London, and Milan (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

This progression towards a more digital fashion industry has paved the way for the emergence and growth of the metaverse concept.

Chapter 1.2. Fashion Shows as a Marketing Tool

A fashion show is often referred to as a "runway show" or "catwalk show" (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023). It is an expressive event that conveys a fashion narrative (Textilelearner.net, 2023). It is organized by a fashion designer to unveil its upcoming clothing and accessory lines, typically held during Fashion Weeks (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Fashion weeks typically take place twice a year, usually spanning a week. During February and March, designers unveil their autumn and winter collections, while in September and October, they debut their spring and summer collections (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

The foremost fashion weeks, collectively known as the "Big 4," take place in Paris, London, Milan, and New York, with Berlin Fashion Week also holding global significance (Vaccarella M., and Foltyn, J., 2013).

Designers must present their collections during Fashion Weeks to be part of and stand out among top designers, renowned brands, and fashion houses, as they unveil their forthcoming lines through a series of runway shows and presentations, too.

Additionally, these events draw the attention of various buyers and media outlets and wield substantial influence over the latest trends for both the present and upcoming seasons (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

It is important to note that fashion weeks are not public occasions and the fashion shows taking place are exclusive events, not accessible to the general audience. Typically, invitations are extended to a select group, including designers, their PR agencies, media professionals, buyers representing prominent boutiques and department stores worldwide, as well as the designer's close friends and celebrity associates (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

The history of fashion shows remains somewhat unclear. In the 1800s, 'fashion parades' were occasionally held in couture salons in Paris, with presentations reminiscent of theatrical productions and, then, the production of grand spectacles, coinciding with the emergence of prêt-à-porter, men's fashion, and the dissemination of fashion through specialized magazines (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

American retailers introduced the concept of fashion shows to the United States in the early 1900s. The first American fashion show is believed to have taken place around 1903 at the Ehrlich Brothers store in New York City. By the 1920s, fashion shows were being hosted by retailers across the United States. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, American designers began organizing their own fashion shows in private venues, separate from retailers. However, in the early 1990s, there was a notable shift in perspective within the fashion industry regarding this approach (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

From the mid-19th century to these days, fashion shows have evolved into a vital medium, enriched with artistic elements that enhance their aesthetic value in the fashion industry (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Overall, runways can vary from simple setups to more elaborate arrangements.

Models utilize the runway, meaning a short platform typically extending into the audience or between sections of outdoor seating, to exhibit their outfits, shoes, and accessories during a fashion presentation (Kumar, M., 2022).

In a typical fashion show, models strut down the catwalk wearing the designer's creations, illuminated by various lighting effects. The sequence in which each model presents a particular ensemble is carefully choreographed to convey the designer's message about their collection (Kumar, M., 2022).

At its core, a fashion show is a true spectacle. Designers often categorized as spectacle creators share similarities with the performing arts, drawing inspiration from theater, opera, cinema, and music videos. Their shows transcend mere clothing, resembling stage productions in their grandeur and presentation (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Within a fashion show, the boundary between fashion and art becomes fluid and indistinct. Various elements employed by fashion designers, including elements from popular culture and historical references, foster the fusion of fashion and performance. Designers can utilize four primary elements - model, location, themes and finale - to create a distinct show. Additionally, the spectacle effect can enhance these four elements, with other implicit components such as music and lighting (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

What sets fashion shows apart from their theatrical counterparts, more often than not, is their primary objective - to serve as a marketing strategy (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

In the realm of fashion, both the clothing and the models play pivotal roles in the presentation, collectively aiming to vividly and entirely convey the beauty and worth of the garments to the audience. The costumes are the central focus of fashion shows, serving as the primary elements to be showcased. Although the models' performance skills significantly impact the effectiveness of presenting the clothing, the models themselves are not the ultimate objective of the fashion shows. Their ultimate purpose and essence lie in promoting the sale of the products (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Nowadays, fashion shows can be described as promotional events for stylish clothing, encompassing both stylistic innovation and production, effectively serving as marketing platforms (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

They attract media attention, create buzz, and generate interest among potential customers.

These events have become a fundamental communication tool, focusing on the visual and performance aspects essential in today's media landscape. The exclusivity traditionally associated with fashion shows can now be leveraged as a marketing strategy (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Additionally, parades have assumed a pivotal function in the mediatization processes and the establishment of parade iconicity within the market, particularly with the emergence of online networking platforms (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Fashion shows primarily have a commercial goal: introducing new collections to the media and fashion buyers (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

These occasions are commonly seen as promotional instruments within the fashion industry, serving as avenues for fashion brands and designers to introduce their latest collections to a worldwide audience (Textilelearner.net, 2023), with the objective of gaining greater recognition from customers to boost sales and secure more orders from manufacturers and retailers (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Fashion shows are not just a platform of connection but also a method to endorse a brand. Sponsoring fashion shows becomes a lucrative avenue for brands, contributing significantly to their revenue (Kiftfashioncollege.com, 2023).

Fashion shows act as a bridge between designers and consumers, enabling designers to present their diverse clothing design skills and enhance the visibility of their clothing lines (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

A fashion show serves as a platform that links clothing, performers, narrative contexts, and designated spaces, all integrated with specialized equipment and additional expertise. This integration aims to realize the creative theme and objective of the presentation's design (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Modern designers now engage in conceptualized collections, and with the involvement of the Creative Director, the shows are intertwined with marketing strategies.

They assume a crucial role in shaping garments as cultural statements, playing a pivotal role in conveying brand values through communication (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Fashion shows stand as paramount communication and marketing instruments through which fashion brands convey their brand image, personality, values, and culture through sensory experiences (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

To this scope, emphasizing the significance of storytelling within fashion shows to convey brand values and narrate the story and inspiration behind the fashion show is crucial (SanMiguel, P., Rus-Navas, A., Sádaba, T., 2023).

Simultaneously, fashion shows aim to elevate the prestige and fame of designers and businesses, thereby expanding their social influence and shaping their public image, among other goals (Textilelearner.net, 2023).

Fashion designers aspire to inspire the audience to make purchases, but it can happen, occasionally, that their innovative experiments in looks and designs will set new trends (kiftfashioncollege.com, 06.11.2023).

These events play a crucial role in fashion marketing by connecting with the target audience. The reception from the audience determines the designer's success, with well-received apparel making its way into the fashion market, ultimately setting new trends (Kiftfashioncollege.com, 2023).

At the core of fashion marketing lies storytelling. Formulating a narrative that strikes a chord with the consumer at a profound level holds greater significance than simply advertising a product. It's about transporting the consumer into the brand's universe, inviting them to participate in the creative expedition, and presenting not just a garment but a lifestyle (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Brands use storytelling to express their brand identity and principles, interact with their audience, and set themselves apart in a fiercely competitive market. A captivating

narrative possesses the potential to establish an emotional bond that can foster consumer loyalty and enhance brand perception (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Storytelling presents a chance to establish a more intimate bond between the brand and the customer, fostering a heightened level of involvement. It transcends merely conveying the brand's vision; it involves inviting the consumer to actively participate and become an integral part of that narrative (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Each seam tells a story within the realm of fashion. The textures, hues, and patterns aren't merely visual selections but they form sentences within a narrative that expresses identity, innovation, and motivation. This is where fashion and storytelling intersect, fostering an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

In fashion marketing, a captivating narrative possesses the ability to elevate an ordinary garment into a sought-after emblem of identity and fashion.

Chapter 1.3. Virtual Fashion Shows and the Metaverse

Lately, fashion shows have seen the emergence of the concept of the metaverse, and a new type of fashion week has come to the surface.

Author Neal Stephenson first introduced the term 'metaverse' in his 1992 science-fiction novel, Snow Crash, depicting a virtual realm where individuals engage with one another and virtual entities instantaneously (Ng, N., 2023).

The metaverse can be roughly defined as a three-dimensional advancement of the internet, enabling individuals to completely engage in interconnected virtual environments that they possess the authority to influence and mold (Ng, N., 2023).

According to Forbes (2023), the Metaverse is currently defined as a completely immersive internet space, providing access to augmented and virtual reality. It allows interaction with diverse environments through persistent avatars and cutting-edge digital technology (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

While the notion of the metaverse has existed for decades, it has only begun to receive substantial attention in recent years due to the emergence of various new technologies that may finally enable it to fulfil its potential (Ng, N., 2023).

As global connectivity grows, the boundaries between the physical and virtual worlds are becoming more indistinct. The Metaverse represents the vast digital realm where augmented and virtual realities intersect (metav.rs.com, 2022).

Advancements in VR, AR, 5G, AI, and blockchain serve as key drivers for the rise of the metaverse. The widespread adoption of sophisticated VR/AR devices could offer a pathway for individuals to engage deeply in virtual realms. The expansion of 5G networks could facilitate universal connectivity, accessible from any device worldwide. Progress in AI could enhance the development and exploration of virtual environments. Lastly, blockchain technology might enable genuine digital ownership for users, alongside serving as an integrated payment system for the metaverse (Ng, N., 2023).

Over the past years, numerous corporations have ventured into the metaverse. Renowned artists such as Travis Scott and Lil Nas X have hosted massive metaverse concerts, attracting millions of concurrent users, while major global brands like Nike and Gucci have made substantial investments to establish their presence in this digital realm (Ng, N., 2023).

The fashion industry is among those industries that have acknowledged the huge potential of the metaverse in their business operations (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

Laura Paleari, in her article 'Fashion and the metaverse: What we know and what to expect', refers to the metaverse as a world that evokes fear, curiosity, and the potential for fresh career paths and which primarily signifies the emergence of a novel way of life, a fresh societal paradigm, and a world that's becoming increasingly tangible, especially in the realm of fashion (Paleari, L., 2022).

Veronica Etro, in charge of the women's division of the brand bearing her name, states: "The metaverse? The metaverse? For me it's like Mary Poppins when she enters the world of cartoons, it's a visionary and fantastic journey through horizons yet to be explored" (Paleari, L., 2022).

Certain significant educational institutions have also demonstrated a keen interest in the metaverse (Paleari, L., 2022).
In April 2022, the Cfda-Council of Fashion Designers of America, which oversees New York Fashion Week, announced its intention to establish a dedicated training program for utilizing the metaverse. Similarly, Polimoda has opted to initiate a course titled "Fashion for Metaverse" aimed at fostering the creation of fashion within the metaverse (Paleari, L., 2022).

The emergence of the metaverse in fashion shows can be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, technological progress has been pivotal. The swift advancements in virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and 3D rendering technologies have facilitated the development of highly realistic and immersive virtual environments customized for fashion showcases.
In the metaverse, fashion commonly involves the utilization of various AR (Augmented Reality) and VR (Virtual Reality) technologies. AR facilitates the projection of fashion items onto the user's body through a digital screen, encompassing augmented (3D) product views and virtual mirror technologies. Augmented 3D product views elevate the experiential value of online shopping, and virtual mirrors serve as a means to minimize the disparity between online and offline environments. VR is employed in the fashion industry through avatars present in virtual fitting rooms. Avatars characterize the application of fashion in the metaverse by enhancing the entertainment aspects of tradable assets, while virtual fitting rooms enhance the customer experience by fostering innovation and curiosity (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

Concurrently, the impact of gaming and social platforms has been significant.

Fashion in the metaverse revolves around a virtual transformation, wherein virtual fashion items are marketed through gaming platforms, digital images, and videos utilizing augmented reality (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023). Platforms such as Fortnite and Roblox, where users can craft and personalize their avatars and virtual settings, demonstrated the potential for deeply engaging social interactions within digital realms.

Moreover, the pervasive wave of digital transformation has swept across the fashion industry. Fashion in the metaverse aligns with the digital fashion trend, where numerous innovations have reshaped the industry in both the physical realm and the metaverse (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023). This transition has occurred as a result of changes in consumer behavior and the necessity for creative methods to captivate audiences.

Furthermore, the growing emphasis on innovation and sustainability in the fashion industry has spurred this transformation. Fashion brands and designers are actively seeking inventive methods to showcase their collections, extend their reach to broader audiences, and mitigate the environmental footprint associated with conventional fashion shows.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst. The pandemic's impact accelerated the adoption of digital solutions across various sectors, including the fashion industry. The pandemic prompted a faster embrace of virtual experiences, as physical gatherings and traditional fashion events became challenging.

Furthermore, the metaverse serves as a haven for unleashing creative ingenuity and ensuring inclusivity. It offers a canvas for creative experimentation and provides a more inclusive way for people worldwide to engage with fashion events, regardless of their physical location.

In essence, the metaverse in fashion shows has come to life due to technological advancements, digital transformation, sustainability concerns, the impact of the

pandemic, and the desire for creative and accessible fashion experiences. As a result, the metaverse in Fashion Week has emerged as a way to blend the worlds of fashion and technology, offering new opportunities for creativity, engagement, and sustainability in the industry.

Technological advancements like the metaverse pose challenges for fashion marketers in designing and promoting their products (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

The metaverse offers fashion designers the capability to host immersive and interactive virtual fashion shows. In lieu of traditional physical runways, designers can craft virtual catwalks within breathtaking digital settings. This innovation allows them to present their collections to a worldwide audience without the constraints of physical venues and logistical concerns (Mandal, A., 2023).

Virtual fashion shows open the door to boundless creativity and experimentation, empowering designers to push the limits and construct distinctive experiences that seamlessly merge fashion, technology, and artistic expression (Mandal, A., 2023).

Within the metaverse, individuals can generate and personalize digital avatars as their virtual counterparts. These avatars can do virtual attire, providing users with a means to convey their unique style and character in the digital realm. Fashion brands can engage in partnerships with metaverse platforms to conceptualize and retail virtual garments, which users can acquire to outfit their avatars. This not only presents an additional income source for fashion brands but also cultivates a virtual fashion marketplace in which users can blend and match digital apparel from various designers (Mandal, A., 2023).

Virtual fashion shows and digital avatars play a pivotal role in advancing sustainability within the fashion sector. They achieve this by minimizing the demand for physical facilities, travel, and the creation of tangible apparel, leading to a noteworthy decrease in environmental impact. Moreover, virtual fashion events and digital avatars enhance inclusivity by eliminating hurdles such as geographical constraints, ticket costs, and venue capacity limitations. This means individuals from all corners of the globe can

partake in fashion experiences and interact with fashion brands, all without the necessity for physical attendance (Mandal, A., 2023).

The metaverse facilitates live interactivity, empowering spectators to actively participate in virtual fashion presentations. Viewers can offer immediate feedback, interact with digital components during the show, and even make purchase choices right from the virtual setting. This real-time involvement elevates user engagement and offers fashion brands valuable insights into consumer preferences and emerging trends (Mandal, A., 2023).

Digital avatars can enable virtual fitting sessions, allowing users to virtually experiment with various clothing and accessories. Through the utilization of augmented reality and virtual technologies, users can preview how clothing items would appear on their avatars before completing a purchase. This individualized and interactive encounter aids users in making well-informed choices and enriches the online shopping journey (Mandal, A., 2023).

The metaverse creates possibilities for partnerships among fashion brands, technology firms, and metaverse platforms. Fashion designers can collaborate with digital artists, game developers, and virtual reality specialists to craft exceptional and immersive encounters. Such joint efforts can give rise to pioneering fashion ideas, projects that bridge the gap between fashion and technology, and the exploration of novel creative frontiers (Mandal, A., 2023).

With the ongoing evolution of the metaverse, the fashion industry stands to harness the digital realm's potential for reshaping fashion encounters, extending its reach to broader audiences, and delving into fresh creative horizons. This dynamic space serves as a thrilling intersection of technology, art, and fashion, presenting innovative avenues for fashion brands to connect with consumers and influence the industry's future (Mandal, A., 2023).

A consideration that may arise is whether these inclusive virtual fashion shows compromise, to some extent, the essence of fashion exclusivity, which, though occasionally burdensome, undoubtedly amplifies the essence of creations, ranging from the more commercially oriented to the exceptionally unique ones (Paleari, L., 2022).

Certainly, considerable effort will be required to seamlessly merge physical content with the virtual realm, as they operate using distinct languages while adhering to the same brand identity. Nevertheless, the fashion industry has consistently led significant revolutions both economically and socially. Therefore, we can undoubtedly anticipate remarkable technological innovations in this regard (Paleari, L., 2022).

The Metaverse is an investment that is currently in a growth phase. It stands as a significant opportunity for all brands and producers to invest in, potentially yielding substantial profits in the future. Staying fashion-forward and embracing futuristic approaches is vital for companies to maintain their position in this fast-changing industry (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

With the Metaverse, the realm of fashion marketing has discovered a fresh playground (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

In the metaverse, marketing is framed within the context of consumer experience. Consequently, the primary goal of all marketing initiatives is to elevate the consumer experience (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Marketing literature focuses on highlighting the goal-related distinctions among consumers that shape their shopping behaviors in the metaverse. Brands and retailers are developing digital twins with a focus on engaging next-generation (Generation Z) buyers and pro-consumers (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Marketers prioritize immersiveness, sociability, and environmental fidelity as crucial elements when crafting marketing interventions in the metaverse. Immersiveness in the metaverse often relies on integrated technologies, including interactive features that blend virtual and real-world elements. Telepresence, an essential aspect of

immersiveness, revolves around system configurations and specifications. Sociability initiatives aim to enrich the collective experience through augmented reality interventions, significantly influencing consumer attitudes and intentions. Environmental fidelity involves aligning the metaverse with the real-world environment in both physical and functional aspects (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

The metaverse is conceptualized as an innovative platform business model distinguished by its enhanced efficiency, cost-effectiveness, transparency, sustainability, security, and safety. Product platform business models are an expanding trend that involves multiple layers of connections and interfaces, leading to digital products realized through digital twin technology (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

Fashion marketing in the metaverse involves leveraging digital fashion competencies, spanning from digital communication and online reputation to eCommerce. This sphere is poised for ongoing transformations, merging with technological advancements in the metaverse, thereby exerting a substantial influence on marketing strategies (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

The vast opportunities within fashion marketing in the metaverse have been acknowledged, emphasizing the need to further develop this theoretical contribution, particularly in identifying the crucial stakeholders that will shape this fashion ecosystem (Mogaji, E., Dwivedi, Y., and Raman, R., 2023).

The assessment of Metaverse Fashion Week's success could vary depending on the criteria applied. Will it likely drive a notable increase in sales of the physical products that most brands rely on for revenue? Probably not. However, was it a valuable opportunity for generating publicity and marketing impact? Potentially, contingent upon the audience that brands aim to engage with (Bain, M., 2022).

First attempts serve always as learning opportunities, as acknowledged by Decentraland itself. Giovanna Casimiro, a content producer at Decentraland and the organizer of Metaverse Fashion Week, described the event as an "educational process."

The occasion provided valuable insights for brands considering marketing and retailing within virtual environments (Bain, M., 2022).

Many brands view their involvement in Metaverse Fashion Week as an opportunity for experimentation and learning. This is especially pertinent as virtual environments such as games and digital assets like NFTs garner increased attention and revenue. However, balancing these explorations with the maintenance of their meticulously cultivated brand identities poses a challenge for them (Bain, M., 2022).

Baker from Tommy Hilfiger remarked that this poses a significant challenge, especially within the fashion industry, where utmost attention is given to the execution of imagery, brand representation, and every intricate detail. It forms a mental barrier that numerous brands will likely grapple with as we collectively venture into further exploration and experimentation within this realm (Bain, M., 2022).

It is important to note that, within the Metaverse, the craft of storytelling is evolving into an immersive narrative encounter that surpasses conventional norms (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

In the Metaverse, fashion narratives transcend static words or images; they are dynamic and interactive, and deliver a multi-sensory encounter. It's akin to immersing oneself within a novel and actively participating in the story rather than merely reading it. This evolution in fashion storytelling is revolutionizing how brands engage with their audience. Particularly for fashion brands, the Metaverse offers an opportunity to free themselves from the constraints of the physical world and delve into limitless avenues for narrating their brand story (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Amidst the age of social media and fast fashion, storytelling provides an alternative narrative to disposable consumption. It slows things down, refocusing the attention on the creative journey, and emphasizing the significance of craftsmanship and sustainability (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

As the Metaverse emerges, storytelling in fashion marketing transforms. It's evolving to be more immersive, interactive, and pioneering. Consumers now can enter virtual stores, engage with designers' digital avatars, and observe collections being animated

within a virtual realm. This involvement enables them to actively contribute their own experiences to the brand's narrative (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Storytelling within the Metaverse presents a multi-sensory, three-dimensional narrative encounter that significantly surpasses traditional media. For instance, within a virtual fashion show, consumers can secure front-row seats from any global location and even engage with garments, designers, and fellow attendees. This allows them to delve into the designer's inspirations in a manner that a two-dimensional screen or printed page cannot fully replicate (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Furthermore, the Metaverse empowers brands to surpass physical constraints. A brand aiming to debut a collection on Mars or beneath the sea can achieve this feat. This unleashes the boundless potential for creativity and innovation in storytelling (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

The Metaverse is transforming passive consumers into engaged participants in brand narratives, introducing an entirely fresh aspect to the fashion marketing landscape. With an increasing number of brands venturing into this digital frontier, this style of storytelling is swiftly becoming the prevailing standard (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Picture yourself wandering through a virtual Fifth Avenue, entering an enhanced boutique, and experimenting with AI-designed outfits, all while enjoying a cup of coffee in the comfort of your living room. This represents the dawn of a new era in fashion marketing, characterized by greater immersion, interactivity, and inclusivity than ever before (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

However, the Metaverse isn't solely a technological wonderland designed for customers; it's a landscape teeming with opportunities for brands (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

As consumers increasingly crave digital experiences and Gen Z individuals show more enthusiasm for the metaverse than the physical world, fashion brands are seizing the opportunity to bring their storytelling to life within this digital realm. They're customizing narratives, curating digital collections, and presenting virtual fashion shows. Tactics once confined to the realm of science fiction are now emerging as the hottest trends in fashion marketing (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Users have the opportunity to delve into the inspiration behind each creation. They can wander through the vibrant streets of Paris that influenced its design, engage in conversation with the virtual avatar of the designer, or even observe the dress being meticulously crafted thread by thread within a digital atelier. All of this can be experienced without ever leaving the comfort of their couch (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Here are a few examples of how fashion brands are delving into the metaverse, considering it a means to storytelling the brand essence and, finally, a marketing tool. The renowned fashion brand Balenciaga is leveraging the Metaverse through their Afterworld: The Age of Tomorrow. In this daring and groundbreaking initiative, the luxury fashion brand introduced its Fall 2021 collection in a video game format, granting consumers the opportunity to engage within a dystopian future, interact with non-playable characters, and, naturally, closely examine Balenciaga's latest product range (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Moreover, Nike elevated the concept of engagement within the Metaverse by partnering with Roblox. Through this collaboration, they established a virtual realm named 'Nikeland', enabling users to navigate, partake in games, and notably, experience and purchase digital renditions of their preferred Nike attire. This blend of interactive entertainment and fashion promotion highlights the distinctive engagement prospects offered within the Metaverse (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Furthermore, Louis Vuitton forged a pioneering collaboration with the renowned e-sports game League of Legends to craft digital skins for the game's characters, introducing high fashion into the realm of e-sports. Additionally, they curated a tangible capsule collection inspired by the game, demonstrating a flawless merger of physical and digital fashion marketing (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Last but not least, Burberry's ongoing story of their "Animal Kingdom" presents a compelling tale. This narrative revolves around their iconic emblem, Thomas Burberry's symbol, inspired by his family crest, a knight in armour. Throughout time, the esteemed British luxury brand has progressively introduced an array of enchanting creatures like owls, foxes, and honey bees into their brand realm, with each symbolizing a distinct facet of the brand's identity (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

The narrative extends throughout their merchandise, promotional efforts, retail layouts, and even digital platforms. Burberry introduced an engaging online venture named 'Burberry World', where these creatures were brought to life in a 3D escapade, encouraging consumers to engage in their escapades (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

The narrative of the 'Animal Kingdom' serves to reinforce the brand's legacy, set it apart within the luxury market, and interact with consumers playfully and imaginatively. It showcases how storytelling can elevate a brand beyond mere product sales, creating a distinctive brand world that consumers can relate to and deeply engage with (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Transitioning from 2D screens to immersive 3D digital realms, from passive observation to active engagement, the Metaverse is redefining the principles of customer interaction. It's not just a typical social media engagement or website visit. It offers an immersive, customized, and lively encounter that closely resembles reality, and at times, even surpasses it (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Within the Metaverse, consumers can physically immerse themselves in a brand's realm. They can navigate, interact, and connect with the brand and fellow consumers in unparalleled manners. Users can observe how a dress falls, modify it under various lighting conditions, or witness its movement as it moves. Furthermore, they can encounter and converse with fashion aficionados who share similar interests from all corners of the world (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

This immersive involvement fosters brand loyalty and customer retention. It enables consumers to establish a more profound and intimate bond with the brand. They are no longer merely purchasing a product; instead, they become an integral part of a community (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

The Metaverse presents a tool that can be utilized to craft unforgettable experiences, nurture significant connections, and cultivate lively communities. Within the domain of fashion marketing, this potential for engagement is demonstrating its transformative impact (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Chapter 1.4. Fashion Shows' Stakeholders

Three essential key stakeholders are dealing with fashion business in the metaverse. First, technical developers can create content for the metaverse. Second, fashion brands are contemplating entry into the metaverse to connect with consumers. Third, consumers are willing to immerse themselves in the metaverse and engage with brands and other users (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

It's crucial to recognize the multitude of stakeholders and the variety of roles of fashion designers within the fashion industry since these three key stakeholders offer a comprehensive perspective on fashion marketing (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The first of the previously mentioned stakeholders which is going to be analyzed is the figure of tech developers. These entities include companies, organizations, and agencies possessing the technical expertise to generate content for the metaverse. They are important players within this field since they can apply their skills to elevate fashion marketing within the metaverse. Furthermore, it's fundamental to acknowledge the evolving roles of these technology developers as a link for fashion brands to enter the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

These developers can take the form of video game frameworks; for example, Nike collaborated with Roblox for their Nikeland, Burberry partnered with Mythical Games for Blankos Block Party, and Balenciaga introduced their Fall 2021 collection through a video game, joining forces with Fortnite. Additionally, developers can be individuals, such as Louis Vuitton featuring NFTs created by digital artist Mike Winkelmann, also known as Beeple, to mark their 200th anniversary (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Brands have immense opportunities to partner with these agencies and develop creative initiatives in this pioneering field (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Secondly, there is another crucial character dealing with fashion marketing, meaning fashion brands. Fashion brands include designers, brand managers, marketers, and other industry professionals. These brands are eager to showcase their latest collections in the metaverse, invite consumers to virtual fashion shows, and forge partnerships with other brands (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

For instance, Mythical Games collaborated with Burberry to launch Blankos Block Party, a fashion-focused open-world multiplayer metaverse video game that features NFT vinyl toys on a blockchain (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

It's very important to note that the metaverse presents significant opportunities for fashion brands beyond the luxury sector, offering potential benefits for their engagement in this digital realm. BoohooMAN, a budget-friendly fashion label, has introduced a series of NFTs showcasing their latest clothing items, including t-shirts, hoodies, tracksuits, and outerwear. This allows consumers to enhance their digital wardrobe (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Collaboration among the different stakeholders coexisting in this sector is fundamental. Fashion brands must collaborate with tech developers to establish a presence in the metaverse. This partnership, involving designers, marketers, and creative directors, is crucial for achieving metaverse marketing objectives. The collaboration often distinguishes established fashion brands with the necessary financial, technical, and human resources from others (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The third stakeholder that is going to be mentioned is the consumer. Consumers enter the metaverse to interact with brands, immerse themselves in the virtual world, and explore alternative environments. Consumers invest immersive time (ImT) in the metaverse, utilizing headsets and other accessories to consistently participate in the metaverse, likely, at least in part, to seek refuge from the real world. The inclination to escape reality has been a fundamental aspect of consumer experience literature and is a trending phenomenon among consumers (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

As consumers interact with various brands and individuals in the metaverse, their increasing interest holds significant implications for fashion marketing. In the metaverse, consumers can purchase non-fungible tokens (NFTs), appreciate the varying degrees of uniqueness offered by fashion brands, attend virtual fashion shows, and customize their avatars with well-established real-world fashion brands (Kolk, 2023).

The stakeholders cited above are going to be analyzed in deeper detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2. Decentraland Fashion Weeks and the case of Auroboros

With the introduction of the concept of the metaverse in fashion shows a new type of fashion week emerged, and with that, also new brands had the chance to come out. Chapter 2 provides an overview of Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week, with concrete examples of how it took place, adding an insight into the brand Aurobors, too.

Chapter 2.1 introduces the new type of fashion week, focusing on the first Metaverse Fashion Week, that took place in 2022 in Decentraland.
The inaugural Metaverse Fashion Week took place from March 24th to 27th, 2022, in Decentraland's virtual shopping district, Metajuku. Decentraland, a 3D virtual platform on blockchain technology, hosted the event, attracting over 560,000 monthly active users (Bain M., 2022). More than 60 luxury brands participated, including Dolce & Gabbana, Etro, and Tommy Hilfiger, showcasing digital collections and establishing virtual stores (Bain M., 2022).
The event featured diverse initiatives, such as Philipp Plein's virtual access to the NFT Museum of the Arts and runway shows by brands like Dolce & Gabbana and Etro (Paleari, L., 2022). Etro's collection paid homage to the Liquid Paisley motif, reflecting the brand's gender-neutral philosophy (Bain, M., 2022).
Despite technical limitations and simplistic visuals, the event highlighted the potential of digital fashion but fell short of expectations due to issues like webpage loading and limited visual detail. Nevertheless, it demonstrated the collaboration between Immersive Spaces and 2D Imagery, paving the way for future improvements in the metaverse fashion experience (Bain, M., 2022).

Chapter 2.2 showcases Auroboros, a London-based digital fashion pioneer founded by Paula Sello and Alissa Aulbekova. Their digital-only ready-to-wear collection debuted at London Fashion Week's DiscoveryLAB in June 2021, earning acclaim for its 'celestial cyber couture' aesthetic (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).
Using AR technology and 3D scanning, Auroboros creates innovative designs like the Biomimicry Digital Collection, which is tailored to individual measurements and free from material constraints (Londonfashionweek.co.uk, 2021).

Their inclusion in London Fashion Week signals a milestone for digital fashion, emphasizing real-world wearability through mixed reality events and augmented reality try-ons (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

The brand challenges traditional fashion norms, focusing on innovation and sustainability in both physical and digital realms. Despite lacking formal fashion backgrounds, Sello and Aulbekova's technical expertise sets Auroboros apart, attracting influencers and artists. Collaborations with the Institute of Digital Fashion and DressX further showcase Auroboros' commitment to pushing boundaries in the fashion industry, with ambitions in real-time virtual production and extended reality (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

In Chapter 2.3 the aftermath of the inaugural Metaverse Fashion Week is described. Overall, the event garnered mixed reviews: while some hailed it as a success, others criticized its underdeveloped nature for such a highly anticipated event (Theinterline.com, 2022). The feedback received varied, with some praising the event's excitement and potential for improvement, while others found it lacking compared to previous digital fashion endeavors.

Despite its limitations, Decentraland 2022 attracted significant industry attention, coinciding with the rise of the metaverse and NFTs.

Brands expanded their virtual presence, offering immersive experiences like Auroboros's digital gallery and Dundas's impressive displays (M., McDowell, 2022). The event drew significant industry attention, showcasing the potential of the metaverse in fashion. The event's impact on physical sales and brand visibility was notable, indicating potential growth in the metaverse fashion market (Bain, M., 2022). Participating brands faced challenges adapting their designs to Decentraland's capabilities. However, the event emphasized experimentation and creativity, showcasing unique experiences impossible in the physical realm.

Looking ahead, brands must navigate the balance between embracing the metaverse's potential and addressing its current limitations. While challenges persist, the First Metaverse Fashion Week laid the foundation for future innovations and opportunities in digital fashion.

Chapter 2.4 looks at Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week 2023, depicting its peculiarities differing it from the First Metaverse Fashion Week that took place the previous year.

Metaverse Fashion Week in Decentraland, its second iteration, hosted over 60 brands like Balenciaga, Adidas, and Coach, showcasing virtual garments and exhibitions accessible to visitors through avatars.

The event highlighted the challenges of creating digital spaces for companies rather than users, with a layout resembling a county fair (Peters J., 2023).

To cite some examples, Adidas introduced its Virtual Gear Collection, offering an immersive experience for users to try on digital wearables, while Coach's Pop-Up Party blended fashion with virtual reality, aiming to pioneer a new era of fashion encounters.

Overall, the event showcased a transition towards immersive virtual reality experiences in the fashion industry, reflecting the evolving landscape of fashion in a digitized world (De Silva, K., 2023).

In chapter 2.5 an insight on Metaverse Fashion Week 2.0 is give, coming from the point of view of an avatar wondering in Decentraland.

Author Jay Peters explored these virtual spaces, finding Coach's booth the most captivating with its surreal artwork and immersive experience. However, Peters noted a sense of isolation and a lack of excitement throughout the event.

He questioned the appeal of digital clothing offered, suggesting that the event might focus more on brand awareness and accessibility rather than directly selling digital clothes.

Overall, Peters felt that Metaverse Fashion Week lacked the social interaction and entertainment found in successful metaverse environments like Roblox or Fortnite.

The last section of chapter 2 highlights the overall assesment of the event.

The conclusion of Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week 2023 saw over 60 brands participating, although overall attendance was lower than the previous year (Theinterline.com, 2022).

Notable debuts included Adidas' innovative digital fashion show and Ilona Song's collaboration with Vogue Singapore, showcasing digital collectibles.

Audience interaction increased, with brands like Tommy Hilfiger engaging users through AI design challenges and blockchain-enabled souvenirs (Kostina, E., 2023). Despite these advancements, challenges remain, as the fashion segment of the metaverse struggles to match the visual standards set by other digital experiences like video games.

The industry must balance the promise of the metaverse with its existing challenges and ensure a seamless transition to digital platforms while addressing emerging threats to physical operations (Theinterline.com, 2022).

Chapter 2.1. Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week 2022

The first Metaverse Fashion Week in history occurred from March 24th to 27th 2022 in Metajuku, a virtual shopping district within the Decentraland platform. Decentraland is a 3D virtual platform operating on blockchain technology, introduced to the public in 2020, which has rapidly reached over 560,000 monthly active users (Bain M., 2022).

Derived from the words "decentralized" and "land," Decentraland is a digital platform that has experienced a surge in popularity, especially after Mark Zuckerberg's establishment of Meta and the subsequent emergence of a new virtual reality. Founded in 2015 by Ari Meilich and Esteban Ordano, this platform enables users to generate their avatars and engage in the buying and selling of virtual land using cryptocurrencies (Paleari, L., 2022).

In Decentraland, users' avatars can socialize, engage in games, and conduct transactions involving the purchase and sale of assets using cryptocurrency. Participating fashion brands were marketing digital creations of their collections and establishing virtual stores within the platform (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

On the official Decentraland website, the slogan 'Explore Fashion without limits' invites visitors to delve into a unique experience. This inclusive event encompassed not just

fashion exhibitions but also featured conferences and virtual stores offering a variety of clothing items for purchase. Remarkably, a meticulously designed virtual city, complete with streets and roads, was orchestrated specifically for this grand Fashion Show.

The spotlight, however, gleamed brightest on the UNXD Luxury District, drawing inspiration from Paris's prestigious Avenue Montaigne. Within this district, industry trailblazers such as Dolce & Gabbana, Etro, Auroboros, and Frank Muller emerged as pioneers in this burgeoning digital landscape (Paleari, L., 2022).

The event involved more than 60 luxury brands, such as Etro, Roberto Cavalli, Dolce & Gabbana, Estée Lauder, Selfridges, and Tommy Hilfiger, as well as the participation of digital-fashion pioneers like Auroboros and DressX (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

The event closed with a live DJ set performed by Grimes within Auroboros' virtual venue (Bain M., 2022).

Decentraland reported an attendance of 108,000 unique visitors on the platform. Furthermore, renowned brands like Chanel, Moncler, Givenchy, and others have begun partnering with digital influencers like Lil Miquela, Hatsune Miku, and various other digital personas to endorse their collections in a fresh and inventive manner (Italian-artisan.com, 2022).

The initiatives showcased were diverse.

Philipp Plein offered virtual access to the NFT Museum of the Arts (M.O.N.A.), alongside concerts and digital store unveilings (Paleari, L., 2022).

Several brands, such as Dolce & Gabbana and Etro, presented runway shows reminiscent of real-world formats, featuring models showcasing the brands' clothing while attempting to integrate into the digital landscape (Bain M., 2022).

Notably, Etro stood out among the participants, presenting a collection specifically crafted for the event and inaugurating an online store (Paleari, L., 2022).

Etro's fashion show took place at the center of Decentraland's Luxury Fashion District, coinciding with the opening of ETRO's inaugural pop-up store. This innovative setup enabled customers to seamlessly transition from the virtual catwalk to etro.com for

shopping. Furthermore, customers could freely explore and experiment with the collection's garments and accessories to dress their avatars within the metaverse (Dunesmagazine.com, 2022).

Figure 1. Etro's inaugural pop-up store (Dunesmagazine.com, 2022).

The brand presented on the runway a collection that pays homage to the Liquid Paisley motif: a modern reinterpretation of one of the House's classic symbols, featuring a lively palette of candy pink, emerald green, and sunny yellow. The ready-to-wear ensembles for both women and men, showcased by 20 avatar-models, levitating along the runway (Bain, M., 2022), reflect the brand's gender-neutral philosophy, conveying a powerful message of vitality and optimism (Dunesmagazine.com, 2022).

Figure 2. Etro's Liquid Paisley motif (Dunesmagazine.com, 2022)

Overall, this platform not only facilitates the purchase of physical garments but also extends to virtual clothing options for avatars, mirroring the approach of Dolce and Gabbana, who have been actively engaged in exploring new digital platforms for quite some time (Paleari, L., 2022). In Dolce & Gabbana's case, models sported cat faces (Bain, M., 2022).

However, due to Decentraland's simplistic visual style, the clothing itself didn't provide substantial focal points for the audience (Bain, M., 2022).

Undoubtedly, being the first digital experience, it highlighted crucial aspects. The visuals strongly echo the familiar "Second Life," featuring rudimentary and less detailed avatars. This may pose significant limitations for many, especially concerning clothing: textures, fabrics, and intricate details nearly vanish, resulting in a flat representation of clothing. Furthermore, encountering multiple issues with webpage loading exacerbates this situation. In essence, it feels reminiscent of the early days when the Internet first

reached households, complete with glitches and challenges. These issues will likely improve over time through accumulated experience and expertise. However, for now, they present considerable difficulties (Paleari, L., 2022).

The Metaverse Fashion Week offered a chance for brands to display the potential of digital fashion, transcending the limitations of physical reality. Within the digital realm, the restrictions of physics and bodily constraints are non-existent. However, the promise was hindered by technical limitations, resulting in an experience that often felt less impressive than anticipated (Bain M., 2022).

2022 Decentraland Metaverse Fashion Week demonstrated that the collaboration between Immersive Spaces and 2D Imagery is possible and effective (Bain, M., 2022). A significant portion of Metaverse Fashion Week occurred within limited spaces, notably a luxury district reminiscent of an open-air mall. Here, users could navigate through various brands' pop-up shops. These spaces primarily resembled conventional stores, featuring installations, branded elements on floors and walls, and products displayed sporadically. However, they emanated an unsettling sense of emptiness, resembling vacant showrooms and lacking overall excitement (Bain, M., 2022).

Chapter 2.2. Spotlight on Startup: Auroboros Pioneering in Digital Fashion

One brand that successfully emerged from Decentraland's Fashion Week is Auroboros. The company adopted a more immersive strategy, effectively conveying the brand's unique perspective. Rather than attempting to conform to Decentraland's environment, it built its own space, complete with a floor submerged in water and walls that exuded a shimmering effect (Bain, M., 2022).

Auroboros is the technology-driven fashion house crafting 'celestial cyber couture'.

By harnessing AR technology and 3D scanning capabilities, the London-based label is digitally pioneering the way forward (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).

The experimental design duo consisting of Paula Sello and Alissa Aulbekova made history as the first to debut a digital-only ready-to-wear collection at a global fashion week. Auroboros showcased a 14-piece collection through a virtual presentation during London Fashion Week's DiscoveryLAB, an immersive platform dedicated to emerging brands, on 12 June 2021. This places them among a select few ready-to-wear brands that have been operational for less than three years (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

Figure 3. Auroboros' first digital ready-to-wear collection (Wightman-Stone, D., 2021).

When asked about how they came out with this new, never seen before brand, emerged, the two co-founders explained their perception towards the brand, fashion and technology.
Paula Sello admits that they "both thought that exploring science and technology can really represent this change in a fashion context" (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).
In addition, she explains that both of them were essentially self-taught and experimental in their method. Paula admitted to not having a fashion design degree but being totally fine with it (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).

They were not only implementing technology into fashion but also they didn't have any background study on the fashion field, making the just-created brand even more new. Moreover, Alissa adds that "both of us were just completely neglecting the 'borders' and 'guidelines' of fashion, we had such a freedom in our minds to build this whole world of AUROBOROS" (Dazeddigital.com, 2022).

All this freedom of creation allowed for the brand to come to the surface and differentiate itself from any other brand in existence.

The aforementioned fashion house, renowned for its fusion of science and technology in both physical couture and digital-ready wear, is based at the Sarabande Foundation, founded by Lee Alexander McQueen. Representing innovation, sustainability, and immersive design, Auroboros has earned accolades from leading media outlets such as Vogue, BBC, and Forbes for its pioneering aesthetic and technological contributions to the fashion industry (Londonfashionweek.co.uk, 2021).

Breaking new ground in fashion, Auroboros introduced its first-ever purely digital ready-to-wear line at London Fashion Week. Unveiling the 'Biomimicry' digital collection, this innovative line draws inspiration from the cyclical forces of nature and technology, influenced by sci-fi films by Alex Garland and anime by Hayao Miyazaki. Free from material constraints and waste, the Biomimicry Digital Collection is inclusive of all body types and sizes, inviting everyone to immerse themselves in Auroboros' utopian world (Londonfashionweek.co.uk, 2021).

Auroboros made history at London Fashion Week by launching its first-ever fully digital ready-to-wear line. The groundbreaking 'Biomimicry' collection is inspired by the cyclical interplay of nature and technology, drawing influences from Alex Garland's sci-fi films and Hayao Miyazaki's anime. This innovative collection, unbound by material constraints and waste, is designed to be inclusive of all body types and sizes, inviting everyone to experience Auroboros' utopian vision (Londonfashionweek.co.uk, 2021).

Auroboros's inclusion in LFW places digital designs alongside emerging physical brands, rather than segregating them into exclusively digital spaces. This move has the

potential to elevate both the brand and the concept of digital fashion to a broader, more traditional audience. Aulbekova remarks, "It's a significant milestone for the entire digital fashion community, hopefully paving the way for a wider audience to recognize its excitement."

For their 10-minute LFW showcase, Auroboros intends to create a mixed reality event, incorporating physical models adorned in digital attire. They've enlisted Sita Abellán, a multi-talented Spanish personality known for her work as a DJ, model, designer, and stylist, to curate the show's aesthetic. Additionally, they are partnering with The Institute of Digital Fashion to create a London billboard that provides an augmented reality try-on experience through Snapchat technology (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

"We aimed to elevate the collection and initiate a conversation that has long lingered around digital fashion and fashion weeks: How does it transition from virtual viewing to real-world wearability? Essentially, how can we shift the focus from 'to view' to 'to wear'?" explains Leanne Elliott Young, co-founder and CEO of the Institute of Digital Fashion (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

Auroboros's presence at London Fashion Week is partly due to the support of the Sarabande Foundation, established by the late designer Lee Alexander McQueen to foster creative talent. Auroboros, currently based at the Foundation, was selected for participation by a panel of judges that included influential opinion leaders, media personalities, buyers, and representatives from the British Fashion Council. Although the BFC refrained from offering direct commentary on their acceptance due to the final selection being made by an independent panel, a spokesperson expressed the BFC's delight at Auroboros's inclusion (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

"We must adopt an open-minded approach and embrace alternative perspectives, particularly as many brands have moved away from traditional fashion shows," explains Trino Verkade, CEO of the Sarabande Foundation. He eventually adds that "this places Auroboros at the forefront of the fashion industry". Verkade emphasizes that the designers' vision resonates with the Sarabande Foundation's mission to champion boundary-pushing talent (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

When the two designers joined forces in 2018, they initially crafted physical couture pieces inspired by the natural world, including designs that organically conform to the

body. With the onset of the pandemic, they transitioned into ready-to-wear garments with a similar nature-inspired aesthetic, but existing solely in the digital realm. Their Biomimicry Collection, comprising 14 pieces showcased at LFW, is available for purchase on their website, the fashion game Drest, and the digital fashion marketplace Dress-X, priced between £100-450. Upon purchase, customers submit a photo for digital tailoring by Auroboros to customize the item to their body. While recent attention has centered on their digital creations, the brand plans to host a physical exhibition and unveil a second digital collection later this year (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

Similar to physical fashion, the pricing and appreciation of digital fashion, exemplified by Auroboros, are determined by the skill and complexity of the design process. "We're not merely employing technology to exhibit physical garments; rather, it's a goal in itself," Sello explains. "We're immensely proud to embark on this journey alongside [other designers]." Aulbekova notes that while the technology utilized in crafting their designs has previously been employed in gaming and film, it is now gaining traction among a broader audience.

Sello studied fashion at the London College of Fashion and sociology at the University of London Goldsmiths, while Aulbekova pursued design at the International School for Creative Arts and communications at Central Saint Martins in London. Consequently, much of their technical expertise is self-taught. Kadine James from Ryot Studios, the creative agency behind The Fabric of Reality virtual reality show last summer, notes that it's rare for fashion industry creatives to have the digital design skills that Sello and Aulbekova possess. "The skills that Alissa and Paula have are invaluable," she adds (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

Natalia Modenova, co-founder of the digital fashion marketplace DressX, notes that Auroboros' designs stand out both visually and technically. "Employing the visual vocabulary of nature and expressing it through tech tools and software is what sets Auroboros apart," she explains. Daria Shapovalova, co-founder of DressX, adds that while the designs resemble digital couture, it may take time for a broader audience to grasp their essence. However, their vision has already captured the attention of

influencers and artists, Shapovalova mentions, with many influencers collaborating with DressX expressing interest in wearing Auroboros designs (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

Sam Field, director of creative technology at Ryot Studios, suggests that luxury brands should take notice. "We're witnessing an increasing number of fashion houses venturing into 3D and considering digital wearables as more than just in-game skins but as an extension of ourselves," he explains. Field, who is also collaborating with Auroboros on a forthcoming project, believes this shift could positively impact representation, democratization, and sustainability. He commends Auroboros for their focus on nature and living organisms as design inspirations, noting that it creates a compelling contrast with the digital realm. Moreover, Field highlights Auroboros' ambitions to enter the world of real-time virtual production and extended reality (XR) (Voguebusiness.com, 2021).

Chapter 2.3. The Aftermath of Decentraland 2022

The first Metaverse Fashion Week showcased a blend of mainstream labels and emerging digital designers and the opinions on the outcome varied (M., McDowell, 2022).

Overall, after the conclusion of the first MetaVerse Fashion Week, some viewed it as a resounding success, while others considered it a questionably underdeveloped initial display for a vision that numerous brands have heavily invested in as the next major trend (Theinterline.com, 2022).

Aside from runway presentations, brands expanded their presence within the fashion district by creating virtual stores and event spaces. Highlights included Auroboros's digital fashion gallery featuring a performance by Grimes, Dundas's impressive larger-

than-life panthers, and an elegant Parisian-style boutique where Etro showcased digital renditions of their latest collection (M., McDowell, 2022).

The current assessment of the event's outcome was mixed. In terms of generating excitement and attracting viewership, it was considered a success by brands and metaverse experts alike. Giovanna Graziosi Casimiro, the head of Metaverse Fashion Week (MVFW), emphasized that what just happened was just the beginning, urging a step-by-step approach. As technology progressed, she anticipated improvements in quality, aligning more closely with the fashion community's expectations. Overall, feedback from participating brands was positive, with organizers already strategizing to incorporate lessons learned from this inaugural event into the next one (M., McDowell, 2022).

Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week garnered significantly more industry attention than any preceding digital fashion event. It was favored by its timing, coinciding with the peak hype surrounding the emergence of the metaverse and NFTs in popular discourse. This virtual real estate platform seized the opportunity to draw in fashion brands and enthusiasts to its blockchain-based platform for the four-day affair (M., McDowell, 2022).

However, for some individuals, particularly those who have been involved in the development of digital fashion for an extended period, the timing seemed premature for hosting a blockchain-based fashion event. Moreover, positioning this event as the pinnacle of digital fashion technology felt belated, especially when considering other high-profile projects as benchmarks (M., McDowell, 2022).

Regarding brand involvement, Metaverse Fasion Wwwl showcased an impressive lineup. Major brands, prominent department stores, renowned music artists, and quite possibly the most significant virtual property owner were all present, extending their combined reach to a customer base (Theinterline.com, 2022).

The series of fashion-centric events drew a diverse array of brands and creatives, such as Etro, Dundas, Dolce & Gabbana, and Estée Lauder. However, notable players in the metaverse like Gucci and Ralph Lauren opted out. The entire experience was rooted in blockchain technology, featuring land sold as NFTs and digital fashion items purchased and worn as NFTs (M., McDowell, 2022).

Within the digital fashion community on LinkedIn, there was a lively exchange of opinions. Anne-Christine Polet, who spearheaded PVH's 3D initiatives before launching Hatch and Stitch, remarked: "The user experience might need some refinement to facilitate widespread adoption." Furthermore, Kerry Murphy, co-founder of digital fashion house The Fabricant, which produced the first NFT dress ever sold, reflected: "The future seems reminiscent of the past." However, he noted that despite the outdated user experience, development was progressing rapidly and was expected to improve significantly the following year (M., McDowell, 2022).

Feedback from other participants highlighted several shortcomings. Graphics were deemed rudimentary compared to previous digital fashion events like the Fabric of Reality show in 2020 or Gucci's Roblox garden in 2021. Additionally, the overall experience was marred by glitches, including significant delays and instances where events transformed into screens of black code, making it challenging to engage with planned activities. Furthermore, it was difficult to gauge attendance accurately, as Decentraland automatically dispersed visitors across multiple realms when the platform became crowded (M., McDowell, 2022).

The inherent risk of hyping a metaverse fashion event lied in the limitations of Decentraland's 3D design capabilities. Consequently, the end product may not meet expectations, potentially leaving those who aren't staunch advocates of digital fashion underwhelmed and dissuaded from participating in future events. Given the infancy of digital fashion events and their susceptibility to criticism, coupled with the considerable influence of the crypto community, several experts approached by Vogue Business refrained from openly expressing critiques for fear of jeopardizing forthcoming projects (M., McDowell, 2022).

When viewed from the perspective of the audience, the shortcomings swiftly became apparent. In an industry deeply rooted in aesthetics, the stylized, or simplified, art within Decentraland resulted in a notable discrepancy between the desired level of visual quality sought by consumers and what was actually displayed (Theinterline.com, 2022).

The relatively basic visuals, partly adjusted ensured a seamless experience within the current internet infrastructure. To achieve a more immersive metaverse, substantial advancements in internet capabilities are essential. For now, this setup might not be optimal for capturing intricate garment details or presenting them with the finesse typically seen on other brand channels (Bain, M., 2022).

The showcased level of artistry was, at the very least, comparable to the high standards prevalent in the consistently impressive realms of digital art, grassroots CG, and game character and environment design (Theinterline.com, 2022).

Max Vedel, co-founder and creative director at Swipe Back, a metaverse creative agency collaborating with prominent brands like Gucci, Nike, and Swarovski, remarked: "Being the first always entails a degree of trial and error." He emphasized that while Metaverse Fashion Week (MVFW) may not have been flawless, it served as a significant initial venture for numerous major players into the metaverse. Despite occasional missteps, Vedel noted the presence of remarkable shows throughout the event (M., McDowell, 2022).

Decentraland reported that during MVFW, the platform welcomed 108,000 distinct visitors.
It is crucial to note that a discernible ripple effect on physical sales was evident. Following the event, Morgan Stanley predicted that by 2030, metaverse gaming and NFTs could account for 10 percent of the luxury goods market, offering a €50 billion revenue opportunity and increasing the industry's profit pool by 25 percent. For example, when Roksanda collaborated on NFTs with the Institute of Digital Fashion during London Fashion Week, the brand experienced a 76 percent surge in searches on

Lyst, according to the brand. Similarly, Diesel's announcement during Milan Fashion Week about releasing NFTs alongside physical clothing led to a 41 percent increase in brand searches. Additionally, Balenciaga's appearance in Fortnite in October resulted in more than doubling the brand's views on the Lyst app (McDowell, 2022).

Customers are willing to spend, at least, from what it seems (Bain, M., 2022).
The variety of looks among attendees illustrated the extent to which users are personalizing their avatars beyond the pre-existing free choices. According to Decentraland, users invested $5.5 million in wearables throughout 2021 (Bain, M., 2022).
Tommy Hilfiger's 30 wearable NFTs, featuring digital renditions of three pieces from its spring collection, completely sold out within one hour. Priced at 20 mana each, which is Decentraland's currency, equivalent to approximately $56 based on the current exchange rate, these NFTs offered users the option to exchange them for physical versions of the garments if desired (Bain, M., 2022).
Avery Baker, President and Chief Brand Officer of Tommy Hilfiger remarked their excitement about the rapid sell-out of the digital wearables. However, while evaluating the results, they have noticed a slower pace in converting the NFTs into their physical counterparts (Bain, M., 2022).

Different items failed to generate similar reactions. Auroboros presented a black bodysuit featuring scale-like detailing, priced at 700 mana, equivalent to approximately $1,968. Grimes herself wore this outfit during her DJ set. Out of the 100 units in stock, only one has been sold by march 2022. However, despite this result, the brand highlighted that its primary goal during Metaverse Fashion Week was to establish a connection with its audience rather than prioritizing high-volume product sales (Bain, M., 2022).

For those lacking the financial resources or the risk appetite to host their events, this distributed event mitigated risks and offered rewards to multiple brands. According to Casimiro (2022), determining the optimal timing to embrace these opportunities, guided by technological capabilities, is a crucial decision for brands. "It's a point that

brands will have to deliberate, whether they are willing to venture beyond the traditional aesthetic," Casimiro remarked. He added: "Some may decline given the current landscape but might reconsider in three years. Those brands inclined towards avant-garde and edgy images will likely embrace these opportunities immediately" (M., McDowell, 2022).

The atmosphere of the event exuded a sense of fun and joy, facilitating experiences that would have been impossible in a physical setting.

At Dolce & Gabbana, instead of models, cats strutted down the catwalk. On the Unxd-curated runway, models emerged from model-sized blooming lotuses and could fly, traversing a vast venue reminiscent of an Olympics opening ceremony arena, complete with music-coordinated light shows.

Hogan's after-party featured a dance-off, where attendees could program their avatars to dance using a customizable range of moves, irrespective of footwear or outfit constraints.

Charli Cohen's collaboration with Rstlss involved falling meteorites spawning wearables. Closing the event, Grimes performed within a cavernous, fantastical structure crafted by Auroboros, as guests stood in a central tide pool without getting wet.

"Aside from merely mirroring real life, the aim in the metaverse is to push boundaries and unleash creativity with designs, show spectacles, and the overall experience," Vedel emphasizes (M., McDowell, 2022).

In Decentraland, wearables take the form of NFTs, available for purchase and sale in restricted quantities. During MVFW, participants were encouraged to vie for rare or one-of-a-kind appearances by combining owned assets, exemplified at the Philip Plein after-party.

Designer Phillipp Plein, who orchestrated a fashion show and DJ performance, noted that the event drew both new enthusiasts and engaged existing fans on the platform (M., McDowell, 2022).

The "lifestyle space" D-Cave teamed up with Bulova to sell Decentraland wearables and partnered with the virtual fashion platform Vogu for an event. According to Stefano Rosso, co-founder and CEO of D-Cave, the event attracted hundreds of participants. Rosso, who is also the CEO of BVX (the metaverse business division of OTB, parent company of Diesel, Maison Margiela, and Marni) and a board member of the Aura Blockchain Consortium, reported that they successfully sold "a substantial number" of unique NFTs with Bulova and other wearables.

Andrew Kiguel, CEO of Tokens.com, which possesses the metaverse real estate for the fashion district, remarked that events are particularly effective in attracting visitor traffic. "It's remarkable to witness numerous brands endorsing the metaverse as a fresh avenue for advertising and engaging with consumers (M., McDowell, 2022).

According to the author of the article "Metaverse Fashion Week: The hits and misses", Maghan Mcdowell, attending an event on Decentraland could often be fraught with sluggishness, confusion, or outright failure to function. Upon arrival, there were instances where the music failed to initiate or multiple audio tracks played simultaneously.

Plein came to realize that in the metaverse, it is crucial to commence the music before guests arrive. Otherwise, if the DJ begins later and attendees fail to refresh their browsers, they risk missing out on the music entirely (M., McDowell, 2022).

Apart from logistical challenges, a significant critique revolves around the subpar graphics compared to other digital fashion platforms. "Newcomers attending on desktops with limited hardware may find the world's visual appearance somewhat disappointing," noted Vedel.

Organizers attributed this largely to the limitations of everyday computers and Wi-Fi, which sometimes lack the power for high-fidelity experiences. "They set us back 25 years in terms of resolution," remarked Jason Rosenstein, CEO of NFT auction house Portion, collaborating with Plein to develop the virtual Plein Plaza. "Achieving the correct appearance for wearables is exceptionally challenging."

Specifically, regarding digital fashion items, the constraints lay in the low number of polygons, severely limiting the textures and details of clothing, especially individual

items. Rosenstein explained that designers with intricate 3D versions had to dramatically simplify aesthetics to align with Decentraland's capabilities (M., McDowell, 2022).

According to Casimiro, the Decentraland roadmap outlined enhancements to the capacity for loading 3D objects on avatars in real-time. However, she emphasized the importance for brands to explore aesthetics beyond mere realism, as the Decentraland community favoured a "metaverse-y" appearance in spaces and items (M., McDowell, 2022).

In the virtual realm, fashion takes on a different dimension. While some participants styled their avatars in subtle attire, a significant number of Metaverse Fashion Week attendees intentionally chose clothing and avatars that were eccentric or surreal. These avatars glowed, sprouted wings, or featured unconventional elements like blue skin or a television head for the user (Bain, M., 2022).

Brands discovered the necessity of condensing their designs into items that are recognizably theirs to stand out in virtual spaces. Specifically tailored for Metaverse Fashion Week, Dolce & Gabbana crafted its collection as digital wearables (Bain, M., 2022).

Furthermore, there was a concept of gauging popularity based on the number of avatars present in a space. Due to Decentraland dispersing individuals across multiple realms to prevent overcrowding, not all participants were immediately visible. "When I accessed my own party, it was empty," Plein recounts. "However, the other one was packed. You can be in the same world but not in the same realm."

"At times, Decentraland can feel isolating," Vedel observes. "It lacks inherent sociability, and there have been restrictions on event attendance. However, these are issues expected to improve over time. The space is still in development, akin to the early versions of web pages. With ongoing enhancements and community contributions, it will evolve into something more engaging" (M., McDowell, 2022).

Within the Decentraland chatbox, participants attending the Etro show voiced their disappointment, expressing a desire for a more enjoyable and engaging experience.

Additionally, the brand's name was solely visible at the start, leading some latecomers to struggle to identify the brand behind the show they were viewing (Bain, M., 2022). Decentraland didn't effectively showcase Etro's vibrant and print-centric label, diminishing the brand's inherent strengths. One attendee at the show characterized the clothes, which were adapted from its new collection for the virtual world, as "bland." This portrayal starkly contrasts with the infrequent use of such a description for Etro's physical clothing (Bain, M., 2022).

Alissa Aulbekova, the co-founder of Auroboros alongside Paula Sello, affirmed that the immersive strategy adopted by Auroboros led to the imagination, emphasizing the idea that this experience cannot exist in the physical realm (Bain, M., 2022).
One conventional element that unexpectedly excelled in the 3D environment was 2D imagery. Auroboros displayed images from its Instagram along the spiraling walls of its space, while Tommy Hilfiger installed prominent billboards showcasing its campaign visuals. These images stood out remarkably, boasting sharpness and visual allure against the lower-resolution 3D backdrop of Decentraland (Bain, M., 2022).

Chapter 2.4. Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week 2023

In 2023, Decentraland held its second annual event, Metaverse Fashion Week 2.0, spanning from March 28th to March 31st, 2023 (De Silva, K., 2023).

The 2023 Metaverse Fashion Week was held in Decentraland, where numerous fashion brands created virtual spaces to exhibit their clothing, digital architecture, and fashion aesthetics. More than 60 brands participated, including well-known names like Balenciaga, Adidas, and Coach (Peters J., 2023).
Brands are increasingly exploring virtual social spaces such as Decentraland, with major companies like Meta, Epic Games, and Roblox vying to attract these brands to their own metaverses. However, Metaverse Fashion Week underscores the challenges of developing a digital space that prioritizes companies over the visiting users (Peters J., 2023).

Metaverse Fashion Week's layout was reminiscent of a county fair, with the visitor's virtual avatar navigating through elaborate virtual structures of various shapes, colors, and sizes. Throughout the plaza, digital non-player characters modeled a variety of clothing (Peters J., 2023).

According to the author of the article 'Metaverse Fashion Week: Digital's New Era?', Kevin De Silva, the 2023 Metaverse Fashion Week marked a significant milestone in the fashion world. Esteemed luxury labels and digitally native brands like Adidas, Coach, Diesel, and Tommy Hilfiger unveiled their eagerly awaited wearable collections, digital environments, and groundbreaking activations throughout the event-packed week (De Silva, K., 2023).

Adidas introduced its Virtual Gear Collection during its fashion show on March 29th, 2023, dedicated to "streetwear and retail day." Alongside the show, Adidas offered an immersive experience enabling users to try on the Virtual Gear collection, which debuted in November.
Holders of Adidas' Virtual Gear non-fungible token (NFT) collection had the unique opportunity to showcase their pieces within Decentraland. Furthermore, Adidas generously gifted 5000 limited edition Decentraland wearables of its renowned Wallrunner jacket in an exclusive blood orange hue. The primary essence of Adidas lies in its immersive experience and the innovative opportunities presented by the metaverse for showcasing wearables in a digital, interactive fashion landscape.
Erika Wykes-Sneyd, Vice President of Adidas's Three Stripes Studio stated "The Adidas Virtual Gear collection was designed to be the highest form of identity – both as a garment you own forever, authenticated on blockchain, and as a style-credible wearable for your alternative lifestyle as an avatar." (De Silva, K., 2023).

Coach's Pop-Up Party in Decentraland epitomized the convergence of the fashion realm with the digital landscape, as exemplified by Metaverse Fashion Week. This collaboration sought to elevate the Coach brand by leveraging the burgeoning popularity of virtual realms to enhance engagement and accessibility.

The Decentraland pop-up event by Coach offered a distinctive encounter, blending the boundaries between fashion and virtual reality. Attendees had the chance to acquire digital wearables while immersing themselves in an environment characterized by a Tabby bag-inspired venue. The event showcased the works of five artists, including Shxpir, Suki Violet, Sarah Ann Banks, Simone, and Reed + Radar, all advocating for self-expression. Through this celebration of individuality and self-expression, Coach aims to pioneer a new era of fashion and virtual reality encounters (De Silva, K., 2023).

The Metaverse Fashion Week hosted by Decentraland has demonstrated a noticeable transition in digital technologies, shifting from conventional digital fashion shows to immersive virtual reality experiences. These experiences include interactive installations that offer attendees novel and engaging interactions with fashion brands. Such innovative endeavours in fashion signify the evolving landscape of the industry. As we step into a new era of fashion, it's undeniable that designers and brands are actively seeking fresh avenues to connect with consumers within an increasingly digitized world (De Silva, K., 2023).

Chapter 2.5. What feels like to be an avatar at Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week

Metaverse Fashion Week, also in its second year, took place in Decentraland, featuring a multitude of fashion brands showcasing their virtual spaces, displaying clothing, digital architecture, and fashionable aesthetics. Over 60 brands participated in the event, with recognizable names such as Balenciaga, Adidas, and Coach prominently featured throughout the virtual landscape (Peters J., 2023).

Metaverse Fashion Week in Decentraland showcased virtual garments and exhibitions from renowned fashion brands, a guest, and potential customer, could visit in the form of an avatar (Peters J., 2023).

Author Jay Peters, explored the virtual booths and installations at Metaverse Fashion Week 2023, and gave his point of view and perception on the matter on the article 'Metaverse Fashion Week had big brands but few people'.

Figure 4. Being an avatar at Decentraland's Metaverse (Peters J., 2023).

Peters describes its visit in the metaverse, giving insights about the various brands.

First, he stopped at Coach's booth, where a massive floating Tabby bag loomed over a scale model city with bustling cars and trains. Resembling a meticulously crafted model train diorama, everything was bathed in the same shade of pink.
Inside the bag was a mesmerizing spectacle, with walls adorned in purple Coach logos and adorned with surreal artwork. Dance music filled the air, prompting my character to spontaneously start dancing (Peters J., 2023).

In the centre of the room stood a statue adorned in what resembled a pink swirl scarf, reminiscent of strawberry soft-serve ice cream fashioned into clothing (Peters J., 2023).

Accoriding to Peters, Coach's space stood out as the most captivating one among the visited ones. Peters argues this by saying that the others functioned primarily as virtual

showrooms for digital outfits, and while some were visually appealing, they often proved dull and challenging to engage with (Peters J., 2023).

At a certain juncture, he found himself strolling through a "fashion garden", replete with blocky green trees, tranquil beige pathways, and its own set of terms and conditions to agree to. An arch made of plants served as a "runway," where digital avatars donning various high-fashion ensembles paraded forward. (Peters J., 2023).

Peters found particularly intriguing the Clarks Arcade tucked away in the rear corner, a towering black structure illuminated by vibrant neon pink and blue lights, creating a striking contrast against the garden's serene ambience.

Upon entering the arcade, he encountered an atmosphere reminiscent of both a dance club and a carnival, albeit without any accompanying music. A digital figure sporting a purple top hat presided over the eerily quiet space.

Approaching a basketball game, the author was given the challenge of making as many shots as possible within a 60-second timeframe. Despite attempting various key presses and mouse clicks, I found myself unable to shoot the ball, resulting in a score of zero. Nonetheless, he was rewarded with a pair of digital Clarks boots for its avatar (Peters J., 2023).

Most of the spaces lacked the same level of intricacy. In the primary plaza of Metaverse Fashion Week, the world streamed in as he traversed, causing only a few nearby structures to be visible while buildings would abruptly appear as he explored. Many of the booths seemed haphazardly put together.

For instance, a multi-floor Vogue booth, which remained silent aside from a video panel playing on the top floor, featured an elevator with buttons that, according to Peters, were exceedingly difficult to click (Peters J., 2023).

According to the author, the event was characterized by a sense of isolation, challenging navigation, and a lack of excitement (Peters J., 2023).

Overall, the metaverse unexpectedly seemed silent. With some of the fashion industry's most prominent names participating, Peters hoped for the vibrant energy characteristic of virtual worlds. However, despite the event's visual appeal, what struck the author the most was the absence of sound (Peters J., 2023).

Peters didn't feel the environment particularly lively. While exploring, the author would typically only encounter one or two other individuals nearby. At one point, he stumbled upon the tail end of a runway show, where approximately 10 avatars stood motionless, facing the stage as fireworks illuminated the sky. While some booths emitted the energetic music typical of fashion shows, many were eerily silent, and sound would frequently cut in and out as he moved between different spaces (Peters J., 2023).

The only instance where Peters felt Metaverse Fashion Week truly captured the energy of an in-person event was during the closing party on Friday evening. Set atop a digital DKNY installation, dozens of avatars danced on a virtual dance floor as a video featuring a human DJ played on a large screen. Peters genuinely enjoyed wandering around the party. The chat was abuzz with positive messages, and attendees sported impressive outfits that left him feeling a tad envious (Peters J., 2023).

However, that party stood out as an exception. While many of the showcased clothes looked appealing, they weren't compelling enough for him to acquire them. And although there were a couple of amusing diversions like the Coach collection and the Clarks basketball game, there wasn't much else to engage in besides shopping (Peters J., 2023).

Despite the less-than-ideal portrayal presented by Peters of Metaverse Fashion Week, he gave his opinion on why fashion brands are venturing into metaverse spaces like this. According to Peters, many online games thrive on users spending real money to enhance their characters' appearances, it's essentially the entire business model of Fortnite, after all. This presents an opportunity for fashion brands to introduce players

to their creations through virtual clothing, similar to the Balenciaga outfits featured in Fortnite.

However, in the case of Metaverse Fashion Week, the author doesn't believe the clothes offered anything that couldn't be achieved in the real world (Peters J., 2023).

Nevertheless, selling digital clothes might not be the primary objective. As BPM-PR Firm CEO Monique Tatum explained, a virtual fashion show might incur lower costs than a physical one and be more accessible to a broader audience.

Tatum stated: "Brand awareness is key, and these concepts not only spark conversation but also provide entertainment from the comfort of one's home".

Additionally, the digital nature of events like Metaverse Fashion Week means they can be easily replicated, a luxury not often afforded in the real world (Peters J., 2023).

The author argues that while it was convenient to access Metaverse Fashion Week directly from the computer at any time, that was essentially the highlight of the experience for him.

According to Peters, Metaverse Fashion Week didn't offer an enjoyable visit. To him it felt like a peculiar digital rendition of an event that would be more engaging and social to follow through social media or attend in person. Moreover, it rarely capitalized on the potential of a digital environment (Peters J., 2023).

Peters agrees that successful metaverse environments typically provide activities for users to enjoy with friends; platforms like Roblox and Fortnite are renowned for their gaming opportunities, and even Horizon Worlds boasts engaging community-made spaces for activities like comedy shows. However, wandering through Metaverse Fashion Week in silence left much to be desired in its opinion (Peters J., 2023).

Chapter 2.6. The Assessment of Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week 2023

The conclusion of the second edition of Decentraland's Metaverse Fashion Week (MVFW) boasted a lineup of over 60 brands and partnerships, substantial audience engagement, and a determined mission to surpass the technical challenges encountered in the previous year. Expectations were high (Kostina, E., 2023).

According to Geeiq, a company specializing in metaverse data-powered strategies, MVFW's opening day saw 3,500 unique visitors. Notable returning brands such as Coach, Dolce & Gabbana, and Tommy Hilfiger were prominently featured. However, the overall attendance for the event was approximately 50,000 users, half of last year's turnout (Kostina, E., 2023).

Adidas made a noteworthy debut at MVFW with a six-minute digital fashion show that generated excitement on Twitter due to its innovative designs and the cutting-edge digital pavilion where the event unfolded. The sportswear giant also garnered the highest number of unique visits on the first and second days of MVFW, earning recognition for the most successful branded digital item giveaway with its complimentary Virtual Gear jacket (Kostina, E., 2023).

One of the standout presentations came from the emerging phygital fashion designer Ilona Song, founder of her eponymous fashion house. Song collaborated with Vogue Singapore to curate an exquisite collection of eight digital collectibles, powered by Ready Player Me. These non-fungible tokens (NFTs) celebrated fashion's cultural diversity while offering buyers exclusive access to a fashion show hosted by OVER and discounts on Song's real-life clothing line. This exhibition served as a prime illustration of how innovative designers can harness the metaverse to attract attention to their tangible collections (Kostina, E., 2023).

The 2023 event witnessed a higher level of audience interaction compared to its previous iteration. Dave Carr, Head of Business Development and Creative Strategy at the augmented reality platform OVER, observed that brands are recognizing the importance of "gamifying" and fostering interactive engagement with rewards, such as airdrops.

Carr stressed the significance of identifying elements that resonate with the audience as a strategy to draw people back into their physical space. While the majority of customers still predominantly operate within Web2, the metaverse is increasingly being utilized to showcase the latest fashion trends and reward customers with digital assets that can be redeemed in real life (Kostina, E., 2023).

At MVFW's virtual red carpet, Cathy Hackl, the event's former chairwoman and a prominent collector of fashion NFTs, was adorned in the debut NFT from designer Vivienne Tam. Tam's Mandala embroidered qipao initially made its appearance in physical form on Tam's NYFW runway before transitioning into the digital realm. Hackl acquired the NFT through an auction held by Brand New Vision for the Council of Fashion Designers of America's 60th Anniversary.

"The fashion industry is rapidly embracing the metaverse, and I anticipate this momentum to continue in the years ahead," remarked Hackl, Chief Metaverse Officer at Journey and founder of the luxury tech label VerseLuxe. Furthermore, he added: "Designers are seeking innovative avenues beyond the physical realm and venturing into the virtual space to shape the industry's future." (Kostina, E., 2023).

Taking bold strides into metaverse initiatives, Tommy Hilfiger emerged as a trailblazer in interoperability and bridging the digital-to-IRL gap in 2023. The brand deserves recognition for engaging its Twitter audience through an AI design challenge, guiding AI to generate designs inspired by Hilfiger. Additionally, Hilfiger unified its brand-specific spaces across platforms such as Roblox, Spatial, DressX, and Ready Player Me, linking them through its Decentraland hub where visitors could collect POAPs (proof of attendance protocol), a blockchain-enabled digital souvenir. While Hilfiger's varsity jacket was the coveted item last year, this year's top seller during MVFW was the TH knitted sweater (Kostina, E., 2023).

Overall, if the fashion segment of Metaverse has a problem, it's definitely not a scarcity of talent, but It lies in the presence of other digital experiences, each of which has established an exceptionally high standard for entry that, as of today, fashion's representation has struggled to match (Theinterline.com, 2022).

There are numerous video games that, purely in terms of real-time rendering, appear significantly superior to anything exhibited during MVFW. This isn't limited solely to the dedicated home console or PC titles, although the real-time presentations for those are notably impressive these days.

This is significant not because individuals are specifically concerned about real-time rendering, but because the average consumer is accustomed to higher standards. Video games have become a cultural staple to the extent that a few demographic groups haven't recently engaged with an Xbox controller or played a game on their smartphone. Consequently, any MetaVerse encounter faces a demanding standard to meet visually. Navigating a virtual realm, engaging with virtual goods, and interacting with other visitors should offer a visual experience at least on par with what consumers are accustomed to; otherwise, it risks seeming inadequate from the outset (Theinterline.com, 2022).

To clarify, most video games operate quite differently from decentralized virtual worlds where land is sold parcel by parcel using real-world currency. There are numerous complex workings behind the scenes that, at least for the moment, can justify the absence of a polished presentation. However, if any virtual world intends to position itself as "the MetaVerse," it inherently subjects itself to scrutiny and comparison against similar experiences as part of the definition (Theinterline.com, 2022).

The same standard extends to controls and interactivity. The expectations are exceedingly high: video games have refined their controls – ranging from layouts to analogue stick response curves and dead zones – achieving near perfection over decades. Even the VR industry has predominantly adopted specific methods for free locomotion and static or teleportation-based movement, coupled with measures to address motion sickness (Theinterline.com, 2022).

There exists, to be blunt about it, a plethora of established best practices and extensively tried-and-tested templates that MetaVerse experiences, including MVFW, have either not adopted yet or have dismissed in favour of unnecessarily reimagining established methods. When an experience claims to lead the way in a new model of the virtual world, those reinventions seem to be causing more harm than benefit (Theinterline.com, 2022).

Overall, the future of the fusion of the fashion industry and interactive platforms appears promising. The UK's burgeoning video game industry, experiencing notable revenue growth, strongly indicates a thriving market for digital expression and consumers' willingness to invest in virtual cosmetic items. However, it's essential to note that this industry, alongside other interactive sectors, is highly developed, showcasing its maturity through consistently refined pipelines, tools, and end-user experiences (Theinterline.com, 2022).

As of today, the fashion MetaVerse continues to ask its audience to make numerous compromises and actively engage in meeting halfway regarding aesthetics, interactivity, commercial models, and various other aspects (Theinterline.com, 2022).
For sure, developments and transformations will occur. However, the current challenge for any fashion brand is figuring out how to balance the substantial effort needed to facilitate this evolution while also addressing emerging threats that pose risks to the ongoing functioning of their established physical operations (Theinterline.com, 2022).
In simpler terms, the fashion industry is grappling with numerous existing challenges. While the MetaVerse holds genuine promise, it also appears to bring along its own set of significant issues (Theinterline.com, 2022).

Chapter 3. Stakeholders in Fashion Marketing

In chapter 3, key stakeholders in the metaverse fashion industry are introduced, including technical developers, fashion brands, and consumers.

Technical developers create platforms and content, enabling fashion brands to enter the digital space. Collaboration between fashion brands and developers is crucial (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Furthermore, technology companies provide the tools and platforms necessary for digital fashion marketing, including AR and VR solutions, e-commerce platforms, and data analytics tools. These technologies enable immersive and personalized customer experiences. They offer technical support and ongoing updates, ensuring that digital marketing initiatives run smoothly and leverage the latest technological advancements.

Fashion brands aim to showcase collections and engage consumers, relying on collaboration with tech developers for metaverse marketing (Mogaji, et al., 2023). Designers and brands drive the creative direction of digital marketing campaigns. Their innovative designs and marketing ideas are crucial for capturing consumer interest and setting trends in the digital space. Brands produce high-quality digital content, such as virtual fashion shows, AR try-ons, and engaging social media posts, essential for attracting and retaining customers.

Consumers drive demand in the metaverse, seeking immersive experiences and interacting with brands through activities like purchasing NFTs and attending virtual fashion shows (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Customers provide valuable feedback on digital campaigns, helping brands understand what resonates with their audience. Their engagement with digital content through likes, shares, and comments can drive brand visibility and reach. Customers' online behavior and purchasing patterns offer insights into emerging trends, allowing brands to tailor their digital marketing strategies to meet evolving demands.

Chapter 3.1 delves into the opportunities and potential pathways for stakeholders in the metaverse.

Fashion brands have numerous opportunities in the metaverse, including Metaverse-as-a-Service, partnerships with tech developers, and innovative solutions like NFT sales. These avenues allow brands to enter the metaverse gradually and engage with a global audience.

Additionally, recognizing intellectual property, building brand awareness, enhancing commercial value, promoting sustainable fashion, and offering customization options are key prospects for fashion brands.

Furthermore, also consumers benefit from the metaverse through income flows, socialization opportunities, and the ability to express individuality through virtual fashion (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

However, stakeholders also face challenges, while navigating the metaverse, which are described in chapter 3.2.

Technical developers face hurdles related to computational capabilities and the uncertain adoption of the metaverse.

Fashion designers encounter resource constraints and differentiation struggles.

Consumers, on the other hand, grapple with issues such as ease of use, digital disparity, intangibility of virtual items, and security risks (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.3 introduces a conceptual framework illustrating the dynamic interactions among key stakeholders in the metaverse: fashion designers, consumers, and tech developers.

It highlights the responsibility of fashion brands in crafting immersive experiences for consumers, promoting collections, and offering digital garments.

Additionally, it discusses the collaboration between fashion brands and tech developers, facilitating infrastructure for co-creation and financial transactions.

Furthermore, it explores the engagement between consumers and developers, vital for sustaining interest in the metaverse despite challenges like the digital divide and privacy concerns.

Overall, the framework offers practical implications for stakeholders to leverage the metaverse's opportunities effectively (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.4 outlines potential directions for future research based on the conceptual framework established for fashion marketing in the metaverse.

From the perspective of fashion designers, future studies could delve into the characteristics and marketing strategies of brands entering the metaverse, considering factors like target demographics and geographical origins. Understanding brands' motivations and challenges in the metaverse and addressing the global metaverse divide are also key areas for exploration.

For consumers, research should focus on their efforts to enter and engage with the metaverse, including their immersive experiences and interactions with other stakeholders. Developing real-time audit systems and ensuring robust data privacy policies are suggested. Additionally, understanding how customer experience translates into the digital realm and integrating it effectively into fashion marketing strategies is essential.

From a technical standpoint, future research should investigate the roles of tech developers in facilitating the entry of fashion brands into the metaverse and their collaborative relationship with consumers. Addressing challenges such as fraud, privacy breaches, and financial crimes in the metaverse is crucial.

Overall, this conceptual framework provides a theoretical foundation for future research and practical applications in fashion marketing within the metaverse. While it offers significant contributions, further empirical validation through qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods is necessary to advance our understanding of this evolving field (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.1. Stakeholders' Opportunities and Prospects in the Metaverse

As seen in chapter 1.4, the fashion industry in the metaverse involves three key stakeholders: technical developers, fashion brands, and consumers.

Technical developers, including companies, organizations, and agencies, create content and platforms for the metaverse, facilitating the entry of fashion brands into this digital space.

Collaboration between fashion brands and tech developers is crucial for establishing a strong presence in the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Fashion brands, comprising designers, marketers, and industry professionals, are eager to showcase collections and engage with consumers in the metaverse. Collaborative efforts between fashion brands and tech developers are essential for achieving metaverse marketing objectives (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Consumers play a vital role in the metaverse, seeking immersive experiences, interacting with brands, and exploring virtual environments. Their increasing interest in the metaverse has significant implications for fashion marketing, including purchasing non-fungible tokens (NFTs), attending virtual fashion shows, and customizing avatars with real-world fashion brands (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Regardless of the fashion design type, brand size, or country of origin, fashion brands have significant opportunities and potential to venture into the metaverse, offering their distinctive designs to diverse consumers (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

As tech developers delve into fashion marketing in the metaverse, there are three main opportunities and prospects.

The first opportunity analyzed is Metaverse-as-a-Service (MaaS). With the inclusion of content management systems such as WordPress and e-commerce platforms like Shopify, brands with limited technological capabilities can now create their websites or online stores. This opens up opportunities for Metaverse-as-a-Service, allowing brands to enter the metaverse at a fraction of the cost (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Rather than engaging a designer for the complete development of a metaverse for their fashion brands, there's potential for a 'pay-as-you-go' approach. This presents an opportunity for tech developers, metaverse designers, and agencies to assist brands in entering the metaverse incrementally, one parcel of land at a time. Fashion brands, aiming for a gradual transition, can start small, maintaining a balance between their physical stores and their presence in the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Secondly, partnership opportunities must be mentioned. Early pioneers of the metaverse are capitalizing on prospects in digital experiences, gamified interactions, digital assets, and platforms. These opportunities are primarily geared towards millennial and Gen-Z consumers (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

There exist a lot of opportunities for tech developers to collaborate with fashion brands and entice them into the metaverse. While such partnerships are already in place for certain luxury fashion brands, others, like Gucci, have teamed up with high-tech companies to craft virtual realms featuring personalized avatars (Kolk, 2023). Tech developers and agencies possessing the technical and creative expertise to generate metaverse content can establish partnerships with fashion brands, creating additional business opportunities for these tech companies. This collaboration presents an avenue for business expansion and an extended client base (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The third and last prospect defined is an innovative solution. Specific innovations have contributed to advancements in the metaverse fashion realm, including computer-aided design (CAD), three-dimensional design and development, and 3D printing. These technologies have demonstrated considerable efficacy in creating and prototyping various fashion accessories for metaverse transactions (Mogaji, et al., 2023). Given the fashion industry's widespread efforts to maximize the potential of these technologies, tech developers have a significant opportunity to create inventive solutions that amplify the integration of the metaverse with digital fashion, accelerating the uptake of digital designs in this virtual space (Joor, 2022).

Concerning fashion brands venturing into metaverse marketing, there are five main opportunities and potential paths.

First of the list, sales of NFTs. The primary opportunities for fashion brands in the metaverse involve the sale of NFTs featuring products from specific designers. The metaverse serves as a platform that transcends geographical boundaries, enabling brands from around the world to connect with a diverse audience. Irrespective of the nature of a fashion brand, whether it pertains to design type, brand size, or country of origin, there are significant prospects for brands to enter the metaverse and showcase their distinctive designs to a varied consumer base. With the advantages of Web 2.0,

which allows brands to establish their online presence through websites and social media platforms, sell to a global customer base, overcome the limitations of physical stores, and participate in virtual fashion shows, the metaverse presents an expansive opportunity for brands. NFTs, serving as digital collectibles, offer a unique proposition by providing real-world fashion items as valuable digital assets, akin to their physical counterparts (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The second opportunity that is going to be cited is the recognition of intellectual property. Fashion designers and creators of digital products have the potential to earn royalties through transactions between pro-consumers and post-consumers, as the metaverse business model is not centered around one-time purchases and sales (Joor, 2022).

This meta-economy functions as an ecosystem that supports diverse business models, offering numerous advantages, including the promotion of a sustainable fashion supply chain. Additional benefits encompass decentralized financial transactions facilitated by blockchain systems and opportunities for hyper-personalization. Hyper-personalization fosters the creation of product designs tailored to the individual needs of each customer. Blockchain technology, with its inherent capabilities, plays a crucial role in ensuring the legitimacy of luxury goods by providing two key advantages: preventing the circulation of counterfeit products and assuring consumers of the accuracy of their purchases. The use of blockchain to establish a monitoring and tracing system also holds the potential to reduce operational expenses in the fashion retail sector by enhancing data management and supply chain management capabilities (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Thirdly, another prospect is brand awareness. the metaverse is poised to shape the future of marketing by influencing branding, value creation, and consumer well-being. With its diverse features and tools, the metaverse opens up numerous opportunities for brands. Notably, brands can capitalize on the metaverse's potential to offer unique product experiences that may not be feasible in the physical world, leveraging the heightened levels of imagination and creativity within the virtual realm. This includes the use of digital billboards as effective tools for promoting product offerings.

Furthermore, the metaverse provides a platform for brands to foster loyal customer communities, tapping into the brand communities that thrive within this digital space (Joor, 2022).

Another potentiality for fashion brands in the metaverse is brand commercial value. The metaverse offers a compelling opportunity for fashion brands due to the heightened level of digitization in today's world. This extensive digital presence has led to increased online activity, presenting numerous possibilities for the fashion industry. Within the metaverse, there are new avenues for marketing fashion products, enhancing the commercial value of luxury-branded goods and services. This commercial value is derived from the unique interactions with avatars, video game actions, and players, experiences that are not achievable in the physical realm. The incorporation of blockchain technologies provides significant advantages for the fashion industry within the metaverse. These technologies ensure the uniqueness, non-replicability, and security of fashion items, making them impervious to theft. Particularly, blockchain's utilization of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) adds considerable value to real-world fashion designs, making them distinct and tradable assets (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Finally, the last opportunity concerning fashion brands that is going to be analyzed is sustainable fashion. Fashion marketing within the metaverse is seen as a sustainable development endeavor, with a focus on transforming product design and production practices. Sustainability is achieved during the production phase through virtual design and product releases, which substantially lessen the environmental footprint associated with traditional textile manufacturing. The use of blockchain technology and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) further allows brands to ensure ownership while safeguarding consumer interests and preserving the intrinsic value of the product. In essence, fashion in the metaverse will empower consumers to express themselves by aligning with their artistic, material, and aesthetic preferences (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Overall, in dealing with consumers, three prospects have been identified.

First, there is customization. In the metaverse, fashion empowers consumers to craft distinct avatars and customize their virtual appearances, offering a means to express their individuality. Users have the option to select from a diverse range of clothing and accessories that mirror their real-life style, preferences, and personality, enabling their virtual personas to authentically represent who they are. As an illustration, within the popular game Roblox, participants can design their avatars, choosing from an array of clothing items and accessories spanning streetwear to formal attire. This creative freedom allows consumers to mix and match elements, resulting in a one-of-a-kind look that mirrors their unique personality and fashion sense. The metaverse's fashion landscape provides a platform for consumers to articulate their individuality and fashion preferences through the creation of distinctive avatars (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The second opportunity that is going to be considered when dealing with customers refers to income flows. Fashion marketing in the metaverse serves as an extension of real-world e-commerce, presenting vast opportunities fueled by the potential for widespread adoption that could significantly elevate revenue forecasts. The metaverse has revolutionized the fashion landscape by introducing novel revenue streams through Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), fostering creative freedom, and unlocking fresh prospects in fashion retail. Unique virtual fashion items can now be transacted as distinctive digital assets. For instance, within the Decentraland game, users can acquire virtual land to construct personalized experiences, including hosting virtual fashion shows. Digital fashion items, treated as NFTs, empower users to possess exclusive, one-of-a-kind items that can be showcased on their avatars or traded among other users. The metaverse has fundamentally altered the dynamics of fashion, turning virtual garments into tangible and tradable elements within the digital domain (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The third and last prospect is socialization. Fashion plays a crucial role in facilitating social interactions within the metaverse. Through donning stylish clothing and accessories, consumers can draw attention to themselves and initiate conversations with fellow users. These socialization opportunities contribute to the development of connections and the cultivation of community within the metaverse. During their

immersive time (ImT) in the metaverse, consumers should interact and engage with other individuals. In the time dedicated to socialization and interaction with fellow users in the metaverse, fashion plays a crucial role in enhancing consumer immersion. By outfitting their avatars in trendy attire, consumers can establish a stronger connection to the virtual environment and fellow users. This social aspect contributes to an enriched overall experience in the metaverse, making it more engaging and enjoyable (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.2. Stakeholders' Challenges in the Metaverse

Despite the many opportunities cited above, navigating the metaverse poses a set of obstacles for the three stakeholders already mentioned.

For what concerns technical developers, there are two main challenges.

The first difficulty that is going to be analyzed is related to computational capabilities. Gaining access to the metaverse is challenging since it requires substantial computing capabilities. These infrastructure and computing demands also present challenges for the fashion industry within the metaverse, particularly in adapting to the ongoing technological advancements and aligning physical and virtual design elements. Given that the metaverse is a nascent technology, the existing computing constraints pose challenges to its widespread adoption (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Secondly, the adoption of metaverse is another obstacle that can be encountered. There are increasing apprehensions regarding the extent to which the metaverse will be embraced and embraced. Despite substantial investments in infrastructure development, uncertainties linger regarding whether consumers will actively engage and remain in the metaverse. While there are assurances of expanding adoption, it is reasonable for consumers to seek clarity before fully committing. Numerous brands may be hesitant to invest in this domain, posing significant implications for developers.

A reduction in the client base might occur as brands curtail their metaverse investments due to limited consumer participation (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Fashion designers encounter two principal difficulties, too.

The first obstacle refers to resources. Gaining access to technological infrastructures and the necessary human resources for developing fashion in the metaverse can pose a challenge, particularly for smaller fashion brands and those in emerging economies with limited resources and capabilities to disseminate their fashion designs through the metaverse. Similar to the Web 2.0 era, where many individuals needed a website but lacked the skills or financial means to design one, these issues may present challenges for smaller brands. While the metaverse is intended to eliminate barriers, the ability to navigate these dismantled barriers may only be accessible to certain brands. Fashion marketing in emerging countries poses unique and multifaceted challenges, especially as these countries strive to compete with brands in developed nations. It is crucial to acknowledge these challenges when examining fashion marketing in the metaverse. One potential solution to address these challenges is the concept of Metaverse-as-a-Service, which has been identified as a significant opportunity. Brands facing limitations in financial resources, human resources, creativity, or infrastructure can explore a lower entry level to the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Secondly, differentiation is another possible barrier. Several prominent multinational fashion entities are making forays into the metaverse with distinctive products and strategies. Nonetheless, a notable obstacle they confront is the endeavor to establish a digital fashion experience that would facilitate the acquisition of market share in the emerging market. The challenge arises from the need to go beyond simple differentiation and explore the vast possibilities within the expansive realms of the metaverse for creating a digital fashion experience. This involves engaging with diverse target groups and employing various marketing tools to drive sales. Key interventions to facilitate the creation of a digital fashion experience in the metaverse include in-world and in-game collaborations, enhancing the gaming experience, and incorporating NFTs alongside AR filters. In-world collaborations primarily aim to transform sport and

play into a lifestyle (Cobben, S., 2022). In-game Skin collaborations are also developed to reach broader audiences with fashion designs, potentially enhancing digital fashion experiences and creating new revenue streams. Additionally, AR filters improve the online shopping experience by enabling consumers to project digital collections onto their bodies (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Finally, the last stakeholders analyzed are consumers. They encounter four main kinds of adversities when entering the metaverse.

The first hurdle they might encounter is the ease of use. The accessibility and user-friendliness of the metaverse can be a crucial factor for consumers. The limited availability of virtual and augmented reality accessories may impede user engagement and the overall quality of their experience. Technological advancements are needed to enhance the overall quality of the metaverse experience, which can, in turn, impact marketing strategies within this virtual space. Addressing the concept of "digital poverty," where individuals lack the necessary hardware to access the metaverse, poses challenges in attracting and retaining users. If people are unable to join the metaverse due to financial constraints or limited access to gadgets, fashion brands may face difficulties in establishing a presence and engaging with their target audience. Consumer attitudes also play a significant role in determining the acceptance of the metaverse as an integral part of their lives (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Secondly, they could face digital disparity. The ease of use can also create a digital gap, as numerous consumers require entry to the metaverse. Socio-cultural obstacles may emerge due to uncertainties regarding consumer behavior and interactions within the metaverse (Wise, 2022). There are growing concerns about how consumers perceive and engage with the metaverse. Recognizing the impact of technological variations and socio-cultural values on attitudes toward technology is essential for brands exploring metaverse opportunities (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The third obstacle that is going to be considered is intangibility. Consumers need to temper their expectations when interacting with fashion brands in the metaverse. A

notable challenge in consumer-brand engagement within the metaverse is the intangible nature of virtual fashion items. This lack of tangibility means that consumers are unable to physically touch, try on, or assess the quality of items before making a purchase. This intangibility may result in dissatisfaction, particularly if the acquired items fall short of the user's expectations. Additionally, while the metaverse offers extensive customization options, some consumers may find that these options still need enhancement compared to real-life experiences. For instance, certain virtual fashion items may not be available in the preferred color or style of the user (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Finally, security risk and fraudulent activities are other difficulties that consumers could encounter when diving into the metaverse. The metaverse remains a relatively recent concept, continually evolving like any other online platform. However, it introduces security risks, including cyber-attacks, hacking, and identity theft. Users must exercise caution to safeguard their virtual fashion items and personal information from potential security breaches. Additionally, consumers should be mindful of the fluctuating values associated with their NFTs (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.3. The Conceptual Framework for the Working Relationship between Stakeholders in Fashion Marketing in the Metaverse
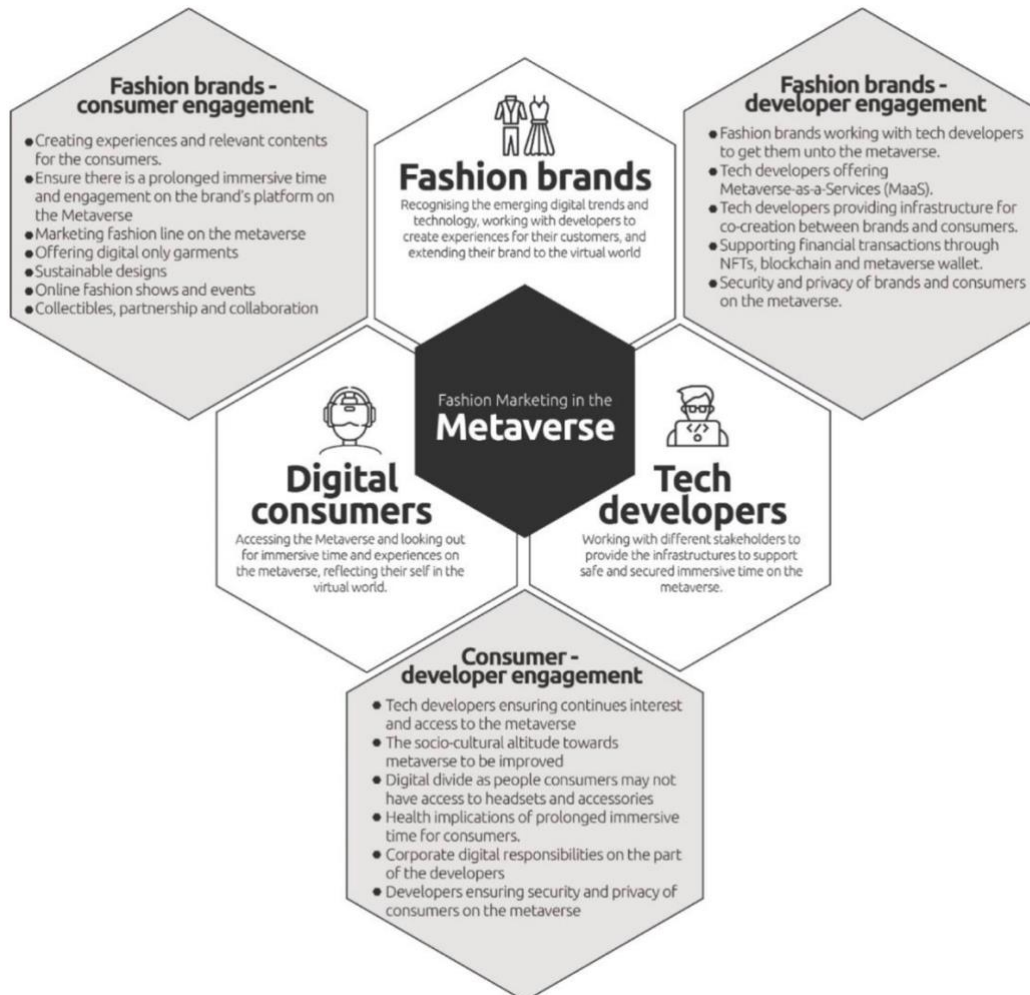

Figure 5. The conceptual framework for the working relationship between stakeholders in fashion marketing in the metaverse (Mogaji, E., et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.3 provides a conceptual framework outlining the dynamic interactions among crucial stakeholders in the metaverse. These stakeholders include fashion designers seeking to promote their brand in the metaverse, consumers exploring fashion collectibles within this virtual space, and tech developers establishing the necessary infrastructure. The framework concisely captures the theoretical roles of these three parties, delves into the opportunities available to them in the metaverse, and addresses the challenges inherent in these opportunities. Figure 5 visually represents the conceptual framework, illustrating the three modes of engagement

among stakeholders aimed at advancing fashion marketing in the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Firstly, the interaction between fashion brands and consumers has been acknowledged, emphasizing the responsibility of fashion brands in crafting experiences and relevant content for consumers entering the metaverse. This interaction enables fashion brands to promote their fashion collections, invite consumers to virtual fashion shows, and offer digital-only garments and collectibles. Secondly, the collaboration between fashion brands and tech developers to enter the metaverse has been outlined. Tech developers can provide Metaverse-as-a-Service (MaaS) to fashion brands, facilitating infrastructure for co-creation between brands and consumers. This partnership supports financial transactions through NFTs, blockchain, and metaverse wallets. Thirdly, the analysis delves into the engagement between consumers and developers in fashion marketing within the metaverse. This interaction is expected to sustain ongoing interest and access to the metaverse, a crucial factor for fashion brands (Joor, 2022). The digital divide, where consumers may lack access to headsets and accessories, coupled with concerns about the security and privacy of consumers in the metaverse, presents a significant challenge in enhancing fashion marketing (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

The conceptual framework provides a concise overview of the opportunities and challenges faced by these stakeholders as they shape the digital fashion ecosystem in the metaverse. It enhances our comprehension of the metaverse as a burgeoning digital technology, particularly in the context of fashion marketing within the metaverse. This increased theoretical and practical understanding explores how the metaverse can be seamlessly integrated into business operations. Moreover, the framework underscores practical implications for stakeholders, offering insights into how they can capitalize on the vast opportunities presented by the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 3.4. Conceptual Framework's Potential Directions for Future Studies

Drawing upon the depicted relationship among fashion stakeholders in the metaverse, section 3.4 outlines potential avenues for future research.

First, from the perspective of fashion designers, forthcoming studies should acknowledge and delve into the characteristics of brands venturing into the metaverse, examining their marketing strategies, target demographics, and technological adoption levels in the exploration of digital marketing models. Gaining insights into the marketing strategies of existing metaverse brands offers valuable guidance for those contemplating entry into this emerging technology. Additionally, future research can illuminate the diverse marketing approaches adopted by brands from different geographical origins. Considering the impact of a brand's origin on consumer perceptions, it is crucial to understand how brands present themselves in the metaverse. Furthermore, future studies should delve into comprehending the motivations and challenges faced by fashion brands entering the metaverse. This understanding is essential for brands to reassess their choices and formulate strategic directions that effectively manage risks while capitalizing on potential opportunities. Furthermore, future research must explore the impact of the global metaverse divide on fashion brands venturing into the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Secondly, from the consumers' standpoint, research should delve into the efforts exerted by consumers to enter the metaverse and their subsequent experiences within it. As previously emphasized, retaining individuals in the metaverse holds significance, making it crucial to comprehend consumers' immersive time and the depth of their involvement in the metaverse. Research endeavours should explore avenues for developing real-time audit systems that quantify user participation, coupled with robust data privacy policies aimed at safeguarding the security of user data. Gaining insights into consumers' activities within the metaverse, their encountered challenges, their confidence in the infrastructure, and their interactions with other stakeholders

will be pivotal in devising effective marketing strategies for fashion brands. Existing literature also underscores the need for further research to establish how the consumer experience can be seamlessly integrated into fashion marketing in the metaverse. While customer experience is well-understood in the physical realm, it remains a relatively novel concept in the digital domain. Unraveling the intricacies of creating compelling customer experiences in the metaverse will be integral to the success of marketing endeavours. Consequently, additional research should explore its application in the metaverse and identify specific factors contributing to its successful implementation (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Thirdly, from a technical standpoint, research should delve into the roles played by tech developers, metaverse agencies, and virtual space designers in facilitating the entry of fashion brands into the metaverse. As illustrated in Figure 1 showcasing the collaborative dynamics between fashion designers and tech developers, forthcoming studies hold the potential to yield substantial managerial implications by investigating how tech developers furnish the necessary infrastructures and engage consumers within the metaverse. Future research endeavours should empirically establish this collaborative relationship concerning the metaverse, shedding light on the fashion brands' reliance on tech developers to establish an enabling platform. Beyond the purview of fashion brands, there is a need for research to comprehend the role of tech developers in facilitating the relationship between consumers and fashion brands within the metaverse. Moreover, delving into the potential challenges within this collaborative framework becomes imperative, addressing concerns such as fraud, impersonation, privacy breaches, and financial crimes in the metaverse. Tech developers are anticipated to provide a secure metaverse infrastructure that caters to the safety and well-being of all stakeholders involved (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Focusing specifically on fashion within the vast opportunities of the metaverse, this conceptual paper outlines the collaborative dynamics between fashion brands, tech developers, and consumers. It identifies the opportunities and challenges inherent in fashion marketing within the metaverse and lays out an agenda for future research. Illustrated in Figure 5, the conceptual framework serves as a theoretical foundation for

both research and practical applications in fashion marketing. This study makes a notable theoretical contribution to the evolving discourse on the metaverse and its intersection with fashion marketing. By elucidating the working relationship among stakeholders, the study opens avenues for innovative product development catering to consumer needs. It also highlights opportunities for co-creation between fashion brands and consumers, enriching their metaverse experience and immersive time. While this study offers substantial contributions, it's essential to note its conceptual nature. Future research endeavours are anticipated to gather qualitative and quantitative data to validate the framework. Engaging with stakeholders through case studies, interviews, and surveys will be crucial, addressing the outlined research agenda and further advancing our comprehension of fashion marketing in the metaverse (Mogaji, et al., 2023).

Chapter 4. Metaverse and Fashion Shows Survey

In this chapter, the survey process is depicted, from methods to results.

Chapter 4.1 describes the methodology used in this research, which combines both primary and secondary data sources.

The primary data collection involved conducting a survey to gauge people's awareness and perceptions of the intersection between the metaverse and fashion shows. This survey utilized the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) method, which is an online survey approach conducted through web browsers or mobile applications. CAWI surveys are cost-effective and efficient, allowing for the collection of insights from a wide range of respondents. However, they are limited to individuals with internet access and computer proficiency.

The survey consisted of a series of questions, including both closed-ended and open-ended questions, to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The questions aimed to understand respondents' knowledge of the metaverse and fashion, as well as their opinions and suggestions on the topic.

The primary data collection process sought to provide additional insights and perspectives to complement the analysis of existing articles and essays in the research.

Chapter 4.2 delves into the results and analysis derived from the research conducted. It reveals that all respondents were from Italy, predominantly female and aged between 18 to 25 years old. Notably, all participants expressed an interest in fashion. Regarding fashion shows, approximately 70% of respondents liked them, with a similar split between those who had and hadn't attended one.

The discussion extends to the respondents' diverse feedback on the metaverse, with around 78.9% expressing interest in learning more about it. While some respondents displayed curiosity and enthusiasm, others expressed uncertainties and concerns about its impact on the fashion industry.

When exploring perceptions of virtual fashion shows, almost 70% of respondents expressed willingness to watch them, and nearly 80% showed interest in both physical and digital formats. Reasons for preferring physical shows included the emotional and

artistic experience they offer, while those in favor of both emphasized their unique values.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents believed that physical fashion shows are effective marketing tools, and while most agreed that digital shows should not replace physical ones, they supported the coexistence of both formats.

Various reasons were provided by respondents to support the coexistence of physical and digital fashion shows, highlighting the potential benefits of integrating both formats for brand presence and audience engagement.

Additionally, section 4.2 discusses the advantages and disadvantages of virtual fashion shows, with some respondents highlighting cost-effectiveness and accessibility as advantages, while others emphasized the emotional connection and tangible experience of physical shows.

The chapter concludes with suggestions from respondents on increasing awareness of virtual fashion shows, including advertising campaigns and leveraging physical events and social media platforms to promote them.

Chapter 4.3 presents the analysis of the results gathered from the survey.

The analysis presented in Chapter 4.2 reveals several key insights regarding respondents' attitudes towards fashion, fashion shows, and the metaverse.

Firstly, there is a notable interest in fashion among the respondents, with none expressing complete disinterest in the topic, suggesting its relevance and engagement within the sample population.

Secondly, there's a positive perception of fashion shows, with approximately 70% of respondents expressing a liking for them, indicating a significant level of awareness and appreciation for this aspect of the fashion industry.

Additionally, respondents showed varied levels of familiarity and curiosity regarding the metaverse, with nearly 80% expressing interest in learning more about it. While some were optimistic about its potential in fashion, others voiced uncertainties and concerns.

Moreover, there's a favorable inclination towards virtual fashion shows, with nearly 70% expressing willingness to watch them, and almost 80% showing interest in both physical and digital shows, highlighting a preference for a hybrid approach.

However, respondents also emphasized the importance of integrating physical and digital shows, recognizing the unique strengths of each format.

Furthermore, respondents identified various advantages and disadvantages of virtual fashion shows, including cost-effectiveness and accessibility, but also noted limitations such as the inability to replicate the emotional experience of physical shows.

In terms of increasing awareness of virtual fashion shows, respondents suggested advertising campaigns, leveraging physical events, and utilizing social media platforms.

Moving forward, future research could explore demographic, cultural, and psychological factors influencing attitudes towards fashion and emerging technologies. Additionally, investigating brand perception, barriers to technology adoption, and ethical considerations in virtual fashion production could provide valuable insights for industry practitioners.

Overall, a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences, technological trends, and socio-cultural dynamics is crucial for driving innovation and shaping the future of fashion experiences in the digital age.

Chapter 4.1. Methods

This research is a socially applied scientific thesis that uses both primary, through a survey, and secondary data, from already existing articles and essays, as its sources.

The chapter above presents the results of an analysis of already existing articles, with the aim to have an understanding on the topic but also the point of view of people, more or less, involved, such as journalists or even stylists themselves.

To understand people's awareness of the topic of metaverse and fashion shows, and get an overview of people's perception of the concept, I decided to collect primary data, developing a survey based on general questions on the matter, giving respondents the chance to provide their point of view on the topic, too.

In this way, this paper can have an additional basis from which to develop relevant conclusions, crucial for present action and future research too.

Primary data collection refers to the procedure of obtaining data directly from original sources. Put simply, it involves gathering data from the organization that intends to utilize it. This process encompasses various methods such as surveys, interviews, observation, and focus groups.

Specifically, surveys stand out as one of the prevailing methods for gathering substantial volumes of primary data. Essentially, a survey entails presenting a series of questions aimed at probing the experiences or viewpoints of a collective group of individuals (Costa, M., 2022).

In this case, the survey posed to the public was a CAWI type, meaning Computer Assisted Web Interviewing, a method utilized in online surveys.

CAWI is synonymous with online surveys or interviews, wherein surveys are conducted via web browsers or mobile applications. Generally speaking, a web survey is a component of a methodology where respondents are provided with a questionnaire via a link, panel, or website. Links for CAWI surveys can be distributed through various channels, including email, mobile app notifications, online ads, and SMS messages.

It is regarded as a cost-effective approach to gathering survey data, as it eliminates the need for CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) or CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing), devices, or additional tools.

While CAWI surveys accommodate both closed-ended and open-ended questions, they might not yield as comprehensive qualitative data as interviewer-administered modes like CATI or CAPI.

CAWI surveys offer a convenient means to swiftly gather insights from extensive sample pools, as they eliminate the need for trained interviewers and can be widely distributed. However, they are restricted to populations with internet access and proficiency in using computers, smartphones, or tablets.

Additionally, CAWI surveys rely on self-administration by respondents, necessitating concise questionnaires to ensure accurate completion without interviewer guidance

Despite its limits, and due to its advantages, online questionnaires are widely used as one of the primary methods for collecting information (Elliott, R., 2021).

To develop primary data, I created a CAWI survey based on some basic and straight-to-the-point questions to start with, adding also some open questions to collect data not already existing but that can provide useful insights.

Questions posed to respondents were various, starting from an understanding of their general knowledge of the topic, then going deeper asking them to give their opinions and suggestions.

Data taken into consideration has the scope to understand how people approach fashion and metaverse, and how they gained a deep insight into their customer engagement and effective use of this marketing tool.

Chapter 4.2. Results and Analysis of Data

Let's take an insight into the results deducted from this research.

Overall, data collection lasted one week and respondents were 102.
By analysing data collected, it resulted that, among the 102 respondets, 100% of them was from Italy, with a slight majority of females with respect to males, see chart 1, and mainly ranging from 18 to 25 years old, with a small percentage of respondents between 26 to 30 years of age, as depicted in chart 2.
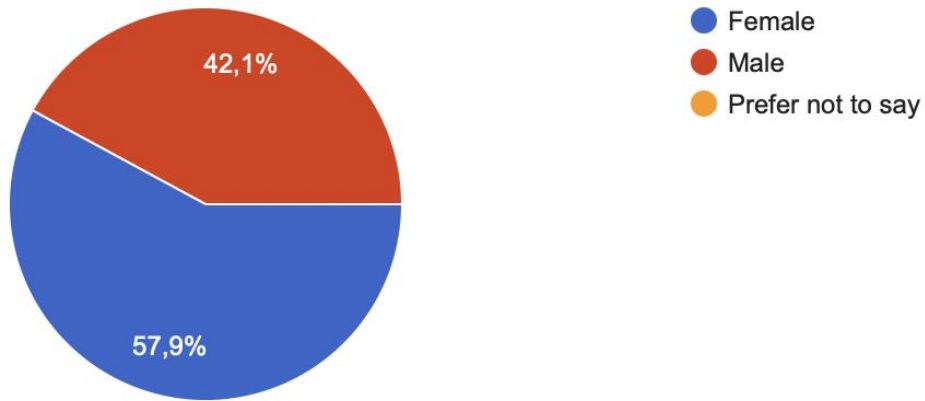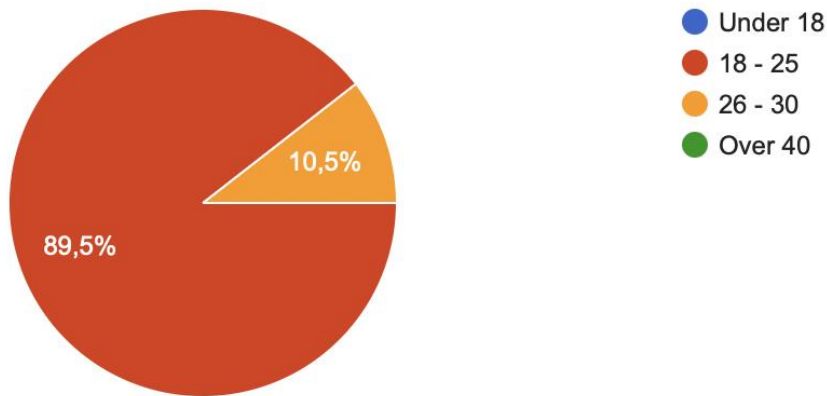
Chart 1. Gender division among respondents

Chart 2. Age ranges among respondents

It appears that respondents are interested in fashion, with noone being not interested at all in the topic, and with a small percentage of respondents, only 10,05 %, more not interested than yes, as represented in pie chart 3, assuming fashion is a relevant topic for the sample taken in consideration.
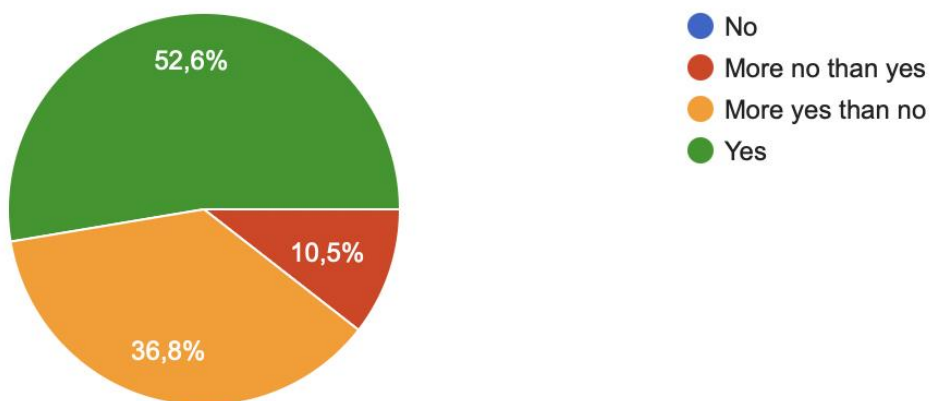

Chart 3. Respondents' interest in fashion

Going deeper on the topic of fashion shows, respondents were asked about their awareness of fashion shows, starting from understanding if they liked them and if they had ever seen one. By the time of the survey, proxy 70% of respondents liked fashion shows, with no one disliking them at all, split equally between those who had and those who hadn't seen one.

Additionally, entering the topic of the metaverse, respondents' feedback was diverse. About having a clue about what the metaverse is, as depicted in chart 4, respondents were split equally between those who knew nothing about it, those who knew something but not much, and those who considered themselves pretty informed on the topic.
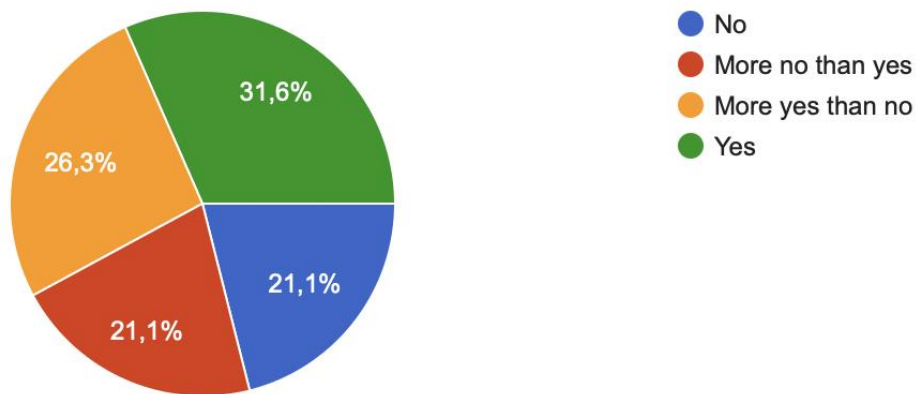

Chart 4. Respondents' knowledge on the metaverse topic

Going further, 78,9 % of respondents would be interested in knowing more about the metaverse. Multiple respondents provided insights on the reasons why.
One respondents shared his curiosity by stating that he would like to know more on the matter "because it's something new never heard before. So, for curiosity".
Another surveyed said that it would be "interesting to see how fashion interacts with different types of media, including the new virtual ones as metaverse".
However, some concerns appeared too.
With a side of uncertainty, one respondent stated: "I find it interesting but I don't know much about this topic, maybe I think it's too far from what I know and the topics I study".

One respondent, despite stating that he thinks it is an interesting the idea, also added: "I'd like to understand if it's a different way to display fashion or if it will be an exaggeration turning the industry into something meaningless", implying some curiosity on the topic but also possible concerns.

Finally, another added: "Certainly the metaverse can give new interesting possibilities to the world of fashion, but I don't know if all the opportunities can be positive", adding a downside to the subject in question.

Now, after introducing fashion shows and metaverse to respondents and understanding their perception on the topics, it was time to understand their perception on virtual fashion shows.

First of all, surveyed had to reply if they would watch a virtual fashion show, with almost 70% of them being in favour. Additionally, when asked if they would prefer to watch a physical or a digital fashion show, 21.1% of respondents would watch only physical shows but almost 80% would watch both, see chart 5, which is an encouraging result.
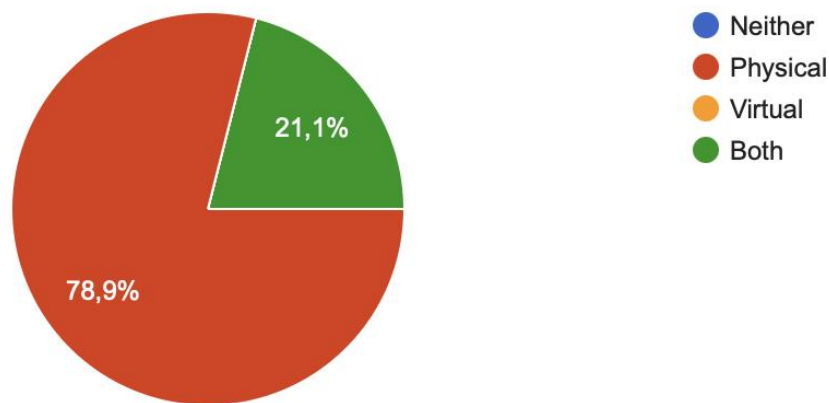

Chart 5. Respondents' willingness to watch physical or/and virtual fashion shows

Also in this case, respondents had the chance to explain the reason behind their reply. Among the circa 20% of people who would prefer to watch only physical shows, reasons differed.

One stated: "Physical because a fashion show is a form of art, from human beings to other human beings. It's emotional. In the metaverse we'd lose its artistic vision".

Another added that, according to him, the experience of seeing a live show can be more satisfying from the point of view of observation and appreciation of clothes. Finally, one respondent believed that "In the virtual one (fashion show) it's impossible to recreate the same ambience of the physical one".

On the other hand, almost 80% of respondents were in interested in watching both shows, and reasons for that were given.

One respondent stated: "I think that in fashion the sensations and the context in which a dress is inserted are essential. Certainly much more concrete and genuine if experienced in person", highlighting that there exist differences in the two methods but without excluding the possibility to experience something in both cases.

One surveyed stated: "I think that both (digital and physical fashion shows) have got their own added value and create different experiences for the watchers".

Another respondent added: "I'd like to watch virtual fashion shows because I can stay at home, whenever I want and wherever I can. At the same time, I think that sometimes hosting an event is different and more stimulating".

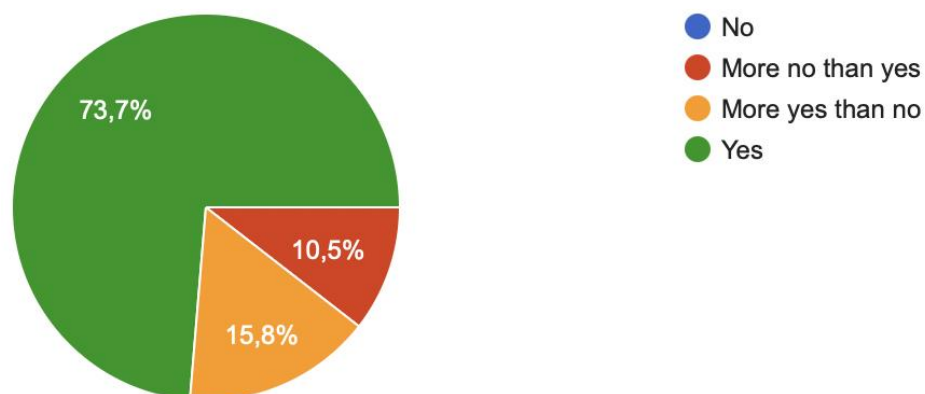As shown in chart 6, almost 90% of surveyed believed that physical fashion shows are good marketing tools.

Chart 6. Respondents' opinion on physical fashion shows as good marketing tools

It is not suprising that the majority of respondents affirmed that digital fashion shows won't and should not substitute physical ones, data which can be seen in chart 7.
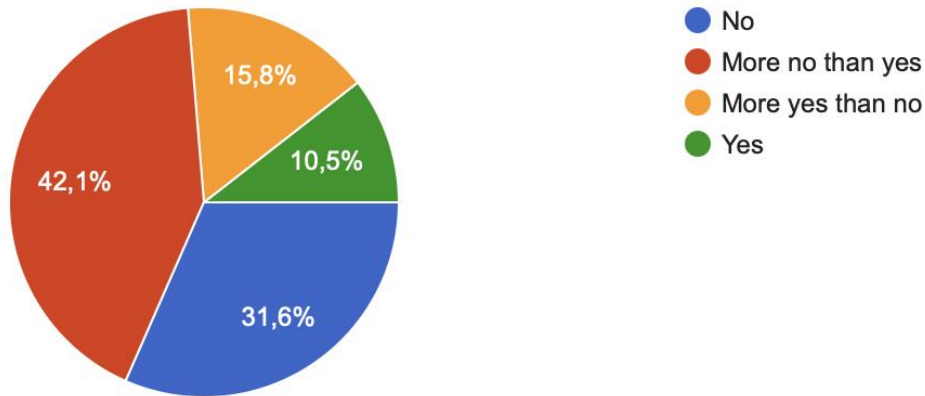
Chart 7. Respondents' opinion on physical and virtual fashion shows' interchangeability

However, it is interesting to note that, according to the surveyed sample, digital and virtual fashion shows should coexist, as depicted in chart 8.
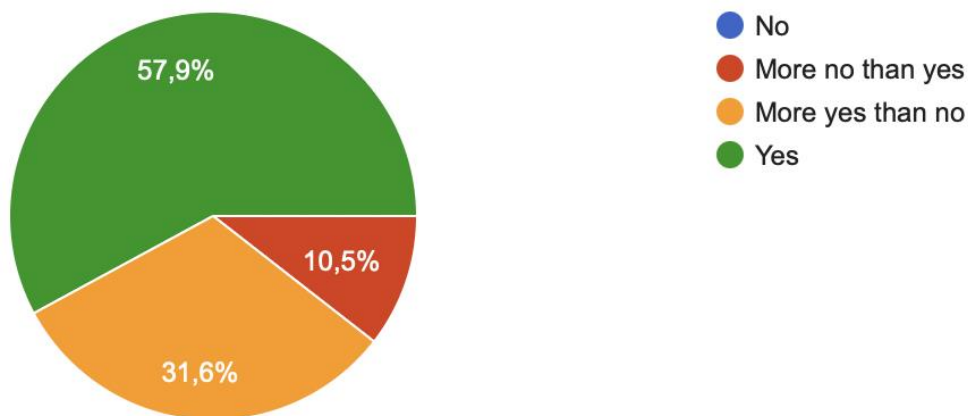

Chart 8. Respondents' opinion on physical and virtual fashion shows' coexistence

Some reasons why were given.

One respondent highlighted a crucial aspect by stating that "both (digital and physical fashion shows) should be used together. A brand which only hosts virtual fashion shows is a brand which could be perceived as less concrete than a brand which has a strong presence in fashion weeks".

Another one from the surveyed sample added: "They (digital and physical fashion shows) can be two tools that, integrated, provide new paths for development".

"Physical runways are talked about for weeks, especially if they are presented as a spectacular show. I think virtual one has got the same potential", stated a respondent, seeing a positive future for the topic if well implemented.

"A brand should demonstrate its presence with physical fashion shows, but also use virtual fashion shows to reach those people who cannot physically be at fashion shows" affirmed one of the respondents.

One respondent gave a very interesting thought by saying that "the digital part of virtual fashion shows can be a tool that can enrich standard fashion shows". However, he added that "as in art, a work in a museum will always have different sensations than a photo in the web", implying that the effect on the public of the two kinds of shows will be diverse.

Some advantages and disadvantages were also brought to light.

According to one person surveyed, fashion shows "are cheaper and faster to organise in the digital form" and another respondents added that "virtual shows could be a comfortable and smart tool, to make events faster to implement."

However, another respondent argued that "virtual reality doesn't give you the same emotions as physical one". Additionally, "Traditional shows need to be held because at the very end dresses are concrete and judging them in a physical situation would be better".

The last question of the online survey aimed at getting useful advices from the public in order to increase people's awareness on virtual fashion shows.

Accoridng to one respondent, one way to do so would be through "more advertisement, such as a campaign, to let people know metaverse in fashion shows". From the various tips provided by respondents, one of them stated that a good way to spread awreness would be to "publicise it when hosting physical fashion shows, so that people know of this opportunity". Moreover, "giving more people access to these virtual show would spread awareness". Additionally, one of the people surveyed suggested that if not in person, it would be feasible to give people the opportunity to see what the potential of fashion is even through social media.

Chapter 4.3. Results

Based on the data presented in Chapter 4.2, several key results can be drawn.

First of all, the research indicates a strong interest in fashion among the respondents, with no one expressing complete disinterest in the topic. This suggests that fashion is a relevant and engaging subject for the sample population. Respondents appear to be prone to the topic, with an interest in knowing more about its potentiality.

Secondly, there is a favorable perception of fashion shows an inclination to know more about them. Approximately 70% of respondents expressed a liking for fashion shows, indicating a significant level of awareness and appreciation for this aspect of the fashion industry. Moreover, the split between those who had and hadn't attended a fashion show was balanced, reflecting a diverse range of experiences among the respondents.

Furthermore, diverse feedback on the metaverse is given. The respondents exhibited varied levels of familiarity and curiosity regarding the metaverse, with nearly 80% expressing interest in learning more about it. While some respondents expressed enthusiasm and optimism about the potential of the metaverse in fashion, others voiced uncertainties and concerns, highlighting the complexity of integrating emerging technologies into traditional industries.

Additionally, the majority of respondents showed openness to virtual fashion shows, with nearly 70% expressing willingness to watch them. Additionally, almost 80% of respondents expressed interest in both physical and digital fashion shows, indicating a preference for a hybrid approach. Reasons for this included the unique value offered by each format and the desire for diverse experiences.

It is also important to note that while respondents believed that physical fashion shows remain effective marketing tools, they also advocated for the coexistence of digital and virtual shows. Many highlighted the complementary nature of both formats and

emphasized the importance of integrating them to leverage their respective advantages.

The survey conducted highlights the advantages and disadvantages of virtual fashion shows. Respondents identified various advantages of virtual fashion shows, such as cost-effectiveness and accessibility, but also acknowledged limitations, including the inability to replicate the emotional experience of physical shows. This underscores the need for a balanced approach that maximizes the strengths of each format.

Different methods to increase awareness of virtual fashion shows were suggested, too. Athe advices from respondents on increasing awareness of virtual fashion shows included advertising campaigns, leveraging physical events, and utilizing social media platforms. These insights provide valuable guidance for promoting virtual fashion shows and reaching a wider audience.

Overall, the research highlights the dynamic nature of the fashion industry and the evolving perceptions of consumers towards emerging technologies like the metaverse and virtual fashion shows. By understanding these insights, stakeholders in the fashion industry can adapt their strategies to effectively integrate digital innovations while preserving the unique aspects of traditional fashion experiences.

It is of crucial importance to note that the theme analyzed in this research has lots of potential and plenty of insights to be developed in depth. Conducting a wider and diversified research can provide some additional implications and possibilities.

First, some demographic cosiderations can be given. While the research focused on respondents from Italy, further analysis could explore how demographic factors such as age, gender, and geographic location influence attitudes towards fashion and emerging technologies. Understanding these nuances can help tailor marketing strategies and product offerings to specific demographic segments.

In addition, cultural perspectives shoul be taken in consideration. Fashion is deeply intertwined with culture, and exploring how cultural factors shape perceptions of fashion and virtual experiences can provide valuable insights. Conducting similar studies across different cultural contexts can reveal unique attitudes and preferences towards virtual fashion shows and the metaverse.

Delving into the psychological motivations behind respondents' preferences for physical or virtual fashion experiences can offer rich insights. Factors such as emotional attachment to physical experiences, novelty seeking behavior, and perceived social status associated with attending fashion events can influence consumer behavior in the context of emerging technologies.

Regarding brand perception and conusmer behavior, investigating how different fashion brands leverage virtual fashion shows and the metaverse to enhance brand perception and drive consumer engagement can provide practical insights for industry practitioners. Understanding how consumers perceive brands that embrace digital innovation versus those that maintain a traditional approach can inform brand positioning and marketing strategies.

Furthermore, exploring barriers to technology adoption and accessibility can shed light on challenges related to virtual fashion experiences. Factors such as internet access, device compatibility, and digital literacy may impact consumers' ability to engage with virtual fashion content. Addressing these barriers is essential for ensuring inclusivity and widening the reach of virtual fashion shows.

Not to forget, also ethical and sustainability topics should be looked at. As the fashion industry grapples with issues of sustainability and ethical production, examining how virtual fashion shows intersect with these concerns can provide valuable insights. Virtual experiences have the potential to reduce the environmental footprint associated with traditional fashion events, but questions regarding the carbon footprint of digital technologies and labor practices in virtual fashion production merit further exploration.

Finally, considering emerging trends and innovations in the fashion-tech space can offer glimpses into the future of virtual fashion experiences. From augmented reality (AR) dressing rooms to blockchain-powered supply chains, exploring cutting-edge technologies can inspire new approaches to virtual fashion shows and consumer engagement strategies.

By delving deeper into these insights, stakeholders in the fashion industry can gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences, technological trends, and socio-cultural dynamics shaping the future of fashion experiences in the digital age. This holistic perspective can inform strategic decision-making and drive innovation in the evolving landscape of fashion and technology.

Chapter 5. Evolutions of the Metaverse in Fashion

The evolving landscape of fashion marketing in the Metaverse appears to be bright, bringing together technology, creativity, and innovation, and promoting growth through advanced managerial practices, theoretical advancements, and social transformations

Forecasts suggest ongoing developments in virtual spaces, mirroring the transformative growth of the internet. Integration with physical spaces, including offering digital upgrades and NFT museums in stores, challenges traditional industry norms. Initiatives like Metaverse Fashion Weeks aim to educate brands on marketing wearables and personalizing virtual spaces, due to a significant increase in digital demand for fashion brands and signaling proactive planning for future endeavors. Virtual fashion platforms provide global reach and eco-conscious alternatives to fast fashion, while AR and VR technologies empower consumers as co-creators, fostering deeper engagement.

Accessibility remains a concern for individual creators, highlighting the importance of genuine accessibility and customizability in the open metaverse.

Authentic connections with the audience will continue to drive success in fashion presentations across both realms.

Despite challenges, experimenting in the Metaverse offers valuable insights for brands and creators, contributing to ongoing learning and strategy refinement.

The future is likely to blend elements of physical and digital fashion experiences, fostering discussions towards greater sustainability.

Furthermore, digital fashion marketing is set for significant growth through advanced managerial practices, theoretical advancements, and social transformations. Managerial Practices will include AI-driven trend prediction and personalized marketing, omnichannel strategies integrating AR and VR, a focus on sustainability and transparency using blockchain, and enhanced engagement through social media influencers, gamification, and real-time customer interaction.

Theoretical Advancements will explore the impact of AI and big data on consumer behavior, develop new frameworks incorporating AR, VR, and blockchain, and evolve theories on sustainability and ethical marketing.

Social Transformations will blur the lines between physical and virtual interactions, promote sustainability and social responsibility, and build trust through transparency and online engagement.

Overall, the future of digital fashion marketing will be shaped by innovation, consumer insights, and ethical practices, positioning brands for success in a connected world.

Chapter 5.1. The Future of Fashion Marketing in the Metaverse

As it is just the beginning of the Metaverse era, the forthcoming landscape of fashion marketing promises an intriguing fusion of technology, creativity, and innovation.

The fashion and luxury brands are expected to witness a significant increase in digital demand in the upcoming years. This is proven by the fact that consumers increasingly gravitate towards e-commerce and digital shopping, as stated in the article 'Fashion Marketing in the Metaverse' (Mogaji, E., et al., 2023).

When dealing with Metaverse Fashion Weeks, according to Casimiro, there are plans for additional educational workshops aimed at assisting brands in comprehending how to market wearables and personalize their spaces. Planning for these workshops will commence at least six months in advance l (M., McDowell, 2022).

Some individuals, like Plein, are continuously developing ongoing spaces. "The metaverse is still quite restricted. What we witness today is merely a fraction of what we can anticipate in the future; it's a new adventure for everyone. When the internet emerged 20 years ago, it bore little resemblance to its current form. It took over 20 years to evolve," Plein remarked. Rosenstein emphasized that in three to four years from 2022 events like these will reach a completely different level (M., McDowell, 2022).

Many foresee increased integration with physical spaces. "This isn't solely about immersing oneself in virtual worlds," states Alex Lambert, creative director of content production studio Happy Finish, known for collaborations with Balmain, D&G, and H&M Group. "It's about progressing towards a stage where we can incorporate virtual elements into reality. Once you're able to purchase a virtual Chanel jacket and then wear it in the real world, that's when significant changes will occur" (M., McDowell, 2022).

Plein has been strategizing a London store featuring an NFT museum and the option to upgrade a physical purchase with its digital counterpart at a lower cost than purchasing the wearable alone. This approach is going to challenge occasional dystopian fears within the fashion industry. "It's a misconception to try to segregate the digital and physical realms," Casimiro asserts, "because they are integral components of the same narrative. I don't foresee physical events being supplanted by digital ones" (M., McDowell, 2022).

Another noteworthy aspect to consider is that even unsuccessful tests yield valuable insights, contributing to the refinement of subsequent experiments. "You truly feel like a trailblazer," Plein remarks. "Everything is fresh, and there aren't many who have ventured into this territory. We are continuously learning through hands-on experience" (M., McDowell, 2022).

Through virtual fashion presentations and online boutiques, brands can reach a global audience, eliminating geographical and logistical constraints. Additionally, digital fashion articles provide an eco-conscious substitute for fast fashion, aligning with the escalating call for sustainable approaches (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality within the Metaverse provide an unparalleled degree of customization. Users can virtually test clothing, explore various styles, and even personalize their designs. This transformation alters the dynamics, granting consumers the role of co-creators in conjunction with brands. By delving into a collection's inspirations and engaging with the brand's creative team, consumers can actively engage in shaping the brand narrative (Metav.rs.com, 2022).

As we enter this digital era, let's welcome the boundless opportunities it presents. The Metaverse signifies more than just the future of fashion marketing: it embodies the new runway, the fresh atelier, and the pioneering frontier of fashion. It's a realm where brands and consumers collaborate, where stories spring to life, and where engagement knows no bounds (Metav.rs.com, 2022)

While corporate involvement underscores the potential of the metaverse, it also underscores the current lack of accessibility for individual creators seeking entry into the space (Ng, N., 2023).

For the metaverse to truly become the future habitat for all, it must be open and accessible to everyone. Presently, the barriers to entry for individual creators to carve out their own presence in the metaverse are significant (Ng, N., 2023).

Once metaverse experiences achieve genuine accessibility, transparency, and customizability, the envisioned potentials of the open metaverse will materialize (Ng, N., 2023).

Emerging technologies persist, driving innovators to explore novel avenues for unlocking the full potential of the metaverse (Ng, N., 2023).

According to the journalist and writer Emma Feldner-Busztin, for some individuals, there's simply no substitute for physically attending a fashion show: the opulent settings, the electrifying atmosphere generated by lighting and music, and the thrill of witnessing the garments firsthand.

Yet, for others, the emergence and acceptance of the new digital fashion landscape represent a profound sense of freedom. Encouragingly, as we move forward, much of what lies ahead is likely to be a fusion of both realms.

This hybrid approach promises to foster more discussions and initiatives aimed at steering the fashion industry towards greater environmental sustainability.

Ultimately, in the realm of digital fashion shows, maintaining a connection with the audience remains paramount, and presentations that authentically capture the human experience will always leave the most enduring impression (Feldner-Busztin, E., 2022).

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital fashion marketing, several key areas will contribute to its growth and effectiveness. These include advanced managerial practices, theoretical advancements, and significant social transformations, each playing a crucial role in shaping the future of the fashion industry.

Data-driven decision-making, omnichannel marketing, innovative technologies, and sustainability practices enhance brand presence and consumer engagement.

Theoretical advancements provide insights into consumer behavior, technology adoption, and branding in the digital era.

Social transformations foster inclusivity, sustainability awareness, consumer empowerment, and cultural shifts, reshaping the fashion industry for a more connected, ethical, and innovative future.

Digital fashion marketing will be significantly shaped by advanced managerial practices. Brands will increasingly leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning to predict trends, personalize marketing campaigns, and enhance customer targeting. The integration of physical and digital shopping experiences through omnichannel strategies will provide a seamless customer journey, enhanced by augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies. Sustainability and ethical practices will become central, with brands promoting transparency and eco-friendly products to meet consumer demand. Blockchain technology will be employed to ensure product authenticity and transparent supply chains, while AI-driven personalization engines will tailor marketing messages and product recommendations. Social media influencers, virtual brand ambassadors, and gamification will be pivotal in engaging customers and building brand loyalty. Additionally, real-time customer interaction through chatbots and live events will enhance customer service and engagement, while collaborative and co-creation models will involve customers in the design process, fostering a deeper connection with the brand.

Theoretical advancements in digital fashion marketing will focus on the interplay between technology, consumer behavior, and marketing strategies. Researchers will explore the impact of AI and big data on consumer insights and decision-making processes. The integration of AR, VR, and blockchain into marketing theories will offer

new frameworks for understanding consumer engagement and brand authenticity. Theories on sustainability and ethical marketing will evolve, emphasizing the role of transparency and eco-friendly practices in building brand trust and loyalty. The concept of omnichannel marketing will be refined to incorporate seamless physical and digital experiences, while the role of influencers and gamification in shaping consumer behavior will be further examined. These theoretical advancements will provide a deeper understanding of how technology and consumer expectations drive the evolution of digital fashion marketing.

Digital fashion marketing will also drive significant social transformations. As the lines between physical and virtual worlds blur, consumers will experience new ways of interacting with fashion brands and products. Virtual fashion shows and AR try-ons will democratize access to fashion, allowing a broader audience to engage with high-end brands. The emphasis on sustainability and ethical practices will promote social responsibility and environmental consciousness among consumers. Blockchain-enabled transparency will foster trust and accountability in the fashion industry, while the rise of online communities and social media engagement will create new avenues for social interaction and brand advocacy. These social transformations will reshape consumer expectations and behaviors, making digital fashion marketing a crucial aspect of the fashion industry's future.

To conclude, the future of digital fashion marketing will be characterized by innovative managerial practices, theoretical advancements, and profound social transformations. Brands that embrace these changes will be well-positioned to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Conclusion

In essence, this thesis seeks to explore the nuances of both physical and digital fashion shows, examining their respective strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately determining whether digital fashion shows can serve as a replacement or complement to traditional runway events.

As described in this thesis, the fashion industry is highly competitive, prompting companies to employ various marketing tools like fashion shows to gain consumer attention and preference.

With the rise of AI and the aftermath of the pandemic, digital fashion shows have emerged alongside traditional in-person events. Both types of shows can serve as potent marketing tools, enhancing brand visibility and awareness.

Digital fashion shows held in the metaverse offer brands unique opportunities to showcase their collections and provide virtual shopping experiences. This new format has been embraced by a wide range of brands, from industry giants like Dolce & Gabbana and Tommy Hilfiger to emerging ones like Auroboros.

In addition, stakeholders are essential for the growth of digital fashion marketing in various ways, as they provide critical support, resources, and insights. They play a crucial role in the growth of digital fashion marketing by offering feedback, driving innovation, providing advanced technologies, amplifying brand messages, facilitating distribution, and ensuring compliance with standards. Their collective contributions help fashion brands create effective digital marketing strategies, reach wider audiences, and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Taking an insignt on secondary research, at present, the fashion metaverse demands that its audience navigates multiple compromises and actively participates in finding common ground on aspects like aesthetics, interactivity, commercial models, and more.

Undoubtedly, there will be developments and transformations ahead.

However, the current challenge for any fashion brand lies in finding a balance between investing significant effort into facilitating this evolution and addressing emerging threats that jeopardize the continued operation of their established physical businesses.

In simpler terms, the fashion industry faces numerous existing challenges. While the Metaverse shows genuine promise, it also presents its own significant issues.

Looking at the array of responses coming from primary research, meaning the online survey, it's evident that individuals acknowledge the significance of traditional fashion shows while also recognizing the potential of virtual counterparts. This implies that both forms should coexist, each offering various advantages and drawbacks. Despite some uncertainty surrounding the topic due to its novelty and limited information, the majority of respondents displayed openness towards it, indicating optimism for its future.

The future of digital fashion marketing will be marked by cutting-edge managerial practices, theoretical progress, and significant social shifts. Brands that adapt to these changes will be well-equipped to succeed in a more digital and interconnected world.

In my opinion, the overall outcome is promising, signaling a bright future for the subject. While still unfamiliar to many, this theme holds significant potential for positive implementation despite being somewhat of a leap into the unknown.

Drawing upon data from various documentary sources, the online survey conducted, and taking a look also at the forecasted future of the topic, this paper represents a cohesive synthesis of research findings. It does not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the topic but rather serves as a catalyst for discussion and future investigation.

The focal point of this thesis, the concept of digital fashion shows, is a novel and burgeoning area with considerable potential for further exploration and development.

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